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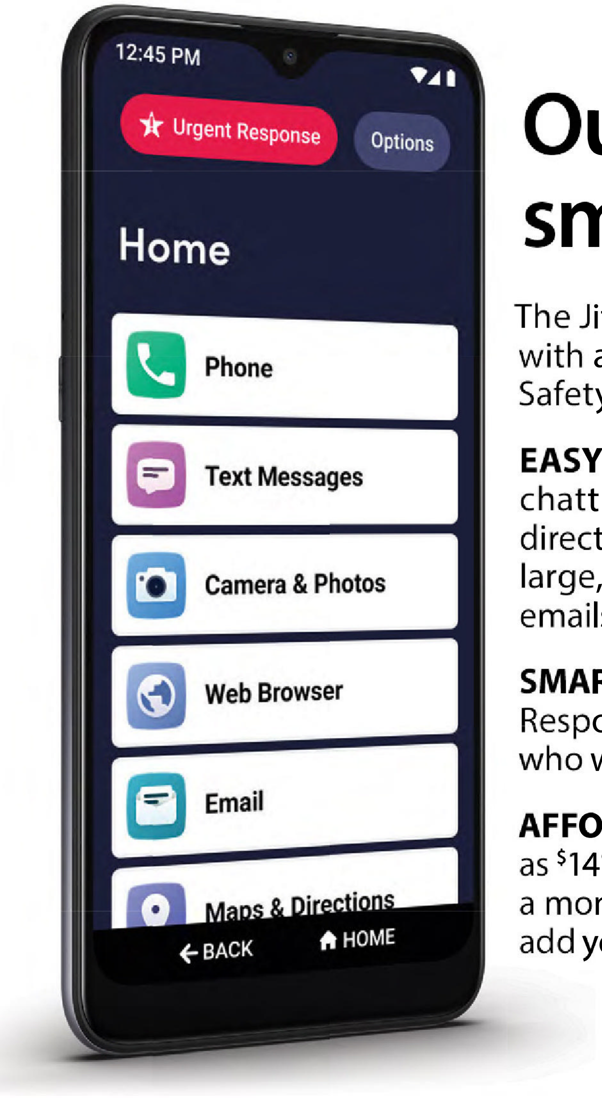

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CONTENTS

JANUARY 2023

COUNTRY extra

FEATURES

20

UNCOMMON ACCOMMODATIONS

Book a stay in these unexpected places and create unique travel memories.

……

30

QUIET WINTER

Experience the wonder of Yellowstone National Park under a blanket of snow.

DISCOVERIES

8 **Top Finds**

12 **Your Parks**
Newport State Park, Wisconsin

14 **Adventure Awaits**
Ice skating

16 **Small-Town Spotlight**
Calumet, Michigan

18 **Wild Things**
Arctic foxes

JOURNEYS

42 **Road Trip**
Exploring Navajo country

46 **Hidden Gems**
North Dakota's Rendezvous Region

48 **I Did It**
Diving under the ice

50 **This Place Matters**
Marion Historical Museum

52 **Wish You Were Here**
Reader travel photos

56 **On the Road**
Photo quiz

58 **Then and Now**
Mammoth Caves

IN EVERY ISSUE

4 **From the Editor**

57 **Submission Guidelines**

57 **Hidden Needle**

ON THE COVER A bison warms itself with steam erupting from Castle Geyser in Yellowstone National Park. By Wanderluster/Getty Images

LITTLE EXTRAS

As a mother, I never play favorites. But as an editor, I find that I simply can't help myself—I have always loved *Country Extra* a little bit more than *Country*. I can confess this to you now because, after more than 30 years in print, this is the last issue.

So why the favoritism? Well, the fact that you *Country Extra* readers wanted more made me work harder to dazzle you, and I had the best time doing that. The *Extra* had to be worth it, and this last issue definitely is.

Let's start with sleeping in a giant dog-shaped cabin. On page 20, you'll find a roundup of unique places to stay that include the aforementioned dog, in addition to teepees, a lighthouse, boxcars and vintage trailers. This story is for readers who love all things quirky, including roadside attractions.

For nature lovers, we offer you Yellowstone in winter on page 30. Writer Kelsey Ogletree trekked to our country's first national park to see it covered in a blanket of snow. If the idea of a hike in the cold makes you shiver, let the images of this land of fire and ice warm you up.

And this issue is full of fantastic experiences from our readers. Field editor Dana Foreman, one of the best reader photographers to grace these pages, takes you on a tour of Monument Valley (page 42). David Paukert introduces you to his country retreat in North Dakota's Pembina Gorge (page 46), while field editor Kallie Kantos learns to dive beneath the ice (page 48).

It's been a privilege to make this magazine. Thank you for sharing your stories with us. On behalf of our small staff (art director Carole Ross, editor Dana Meredith and senior designer Joe Hrdina), we wish you happy travels.

Marija

MARIJA ANDRIC, *Deputy Editor*
marija@country-magazine.com

COUNTRY'S FIELD EDITORS ARE A FANTASTIC BUNCH!

Since 2017, they've shared their stories and travels with us. Their bylines have appeared in the magazine, and you may recognize some of their names below! Thank you, Field Editors!

Adam Kugler, Amanda Hunt, Angela Slay, Anne Duvall, Barbara Steinhorst, Brenda Fulk, Brenda E. Skipper, Candy Thompson, Carolyn Anderson, Christa Sterken, Christina Hoaglin, Cortnie Goodin, Dana Foreman, Dani Bly, Danny Redd, Deborah Moe, Donna Stoll, Georgiana Kurtz, Haley Guion, Heidi Hendrickson, Jamie Cody, Janice Weinholdt, Jarolyn Stout, Jeanne Anderson, Jennifer Hess, Jnel Wright, Judy Wroda, Kallie Kantos, Kathleen Ungerer, Kayla Groen, Kenneth Penner, Kerysa Ford, Krystal Johnson, Laura Miller, Leanne Van Overbeke, Lisa Minnick, Lori Sheldon, Lorry Erickson, Mandi Wood, Marilyn Long, Mark Clodfelter, Melanie McKenzie, Norma Russell, Patricia Hyzer, Rebecca Sophn, Regan Umberger, Rhondalee Spiros, Sandy Warwick, Seth S. Churchfield, Sharon Blumberg, Shelagh Wulff-Wisdom, Sherrie Ball, Stacie Rogers, Susan Neiss, Suzanne L. Crossley, Tami Gingrich, Teresa King, Terri Eden, Trudy Saunders, Valerie Perry, Wendy Schreiner

What our clients are saying about Stauer Helenite jewelry:

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>
> – J. from Orlando, FL

This 4-carat stunner was created from the aftermath of Mount St. Helens eruption!

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Beauty from the beast. Also known as "America's Emerald," helenite is not an emerald at all, but a brighter and clearer green stone that gem cutters can facet into spectacular large carat weight jewelry. "It's just recently that luxury jewelers have fallen in love with helenite," says James Fent, GIA Graduate Gemologist. "Clear green color in a stone this size is rarely found in emeralds but helenite has come to the rescue."

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Discoveries

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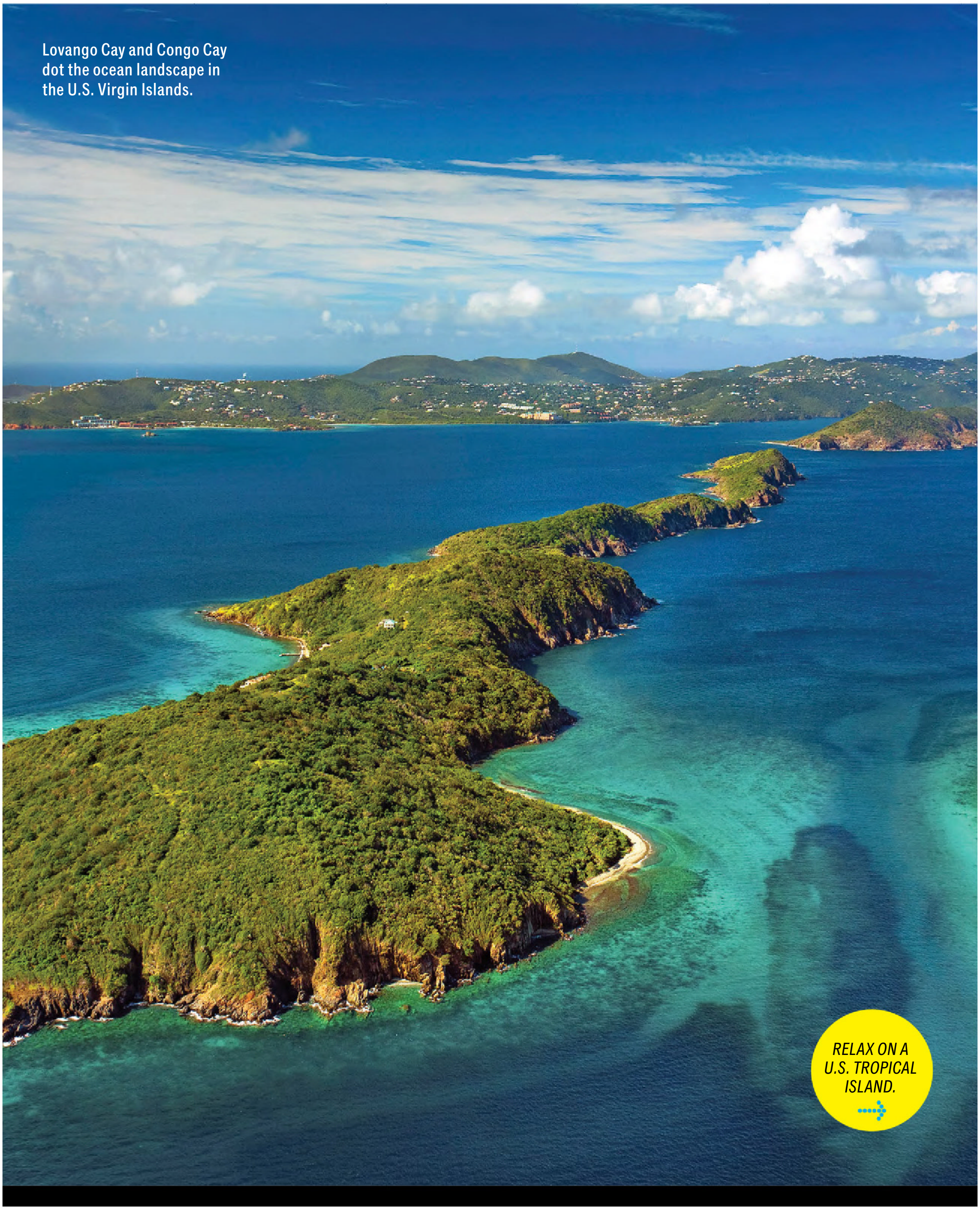


Lovango Cay and Congo Cay dot the ocean landscape in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

RELAX ON A U.S. TROPICAL ISLAND.

LAURIE CHAMBERLAIN/GETTY IMAGES

HIKING

WINTER WALKS

Trek five rewarding trails that show off the season's beauty.

OREGON

If you hike the 5-mile out-and-back **Cape Falcon Trail** in Oswald West State Park in December and January, you may spy a pod of gray whales frolicking offshore as they migrate from the Bering Sea to Baja. This moderately challenging trail ends with a spectacular view. Wear your hiking boots, because the trail can be quite muddy.

ILLINOIS

Several frozen waterfalls and deep canyons line the 4.4-mile **LaSalle Canyon Loop Trail** in beautiful Starved Rock State Park. Elevation changes (there are nine staircases) make this an intermediate trail worthy of microspikes in icy conditions. Take the short spur to Eagle Cliff overlook to spot the eagles that nest in the area during winter.

VIRGINIA

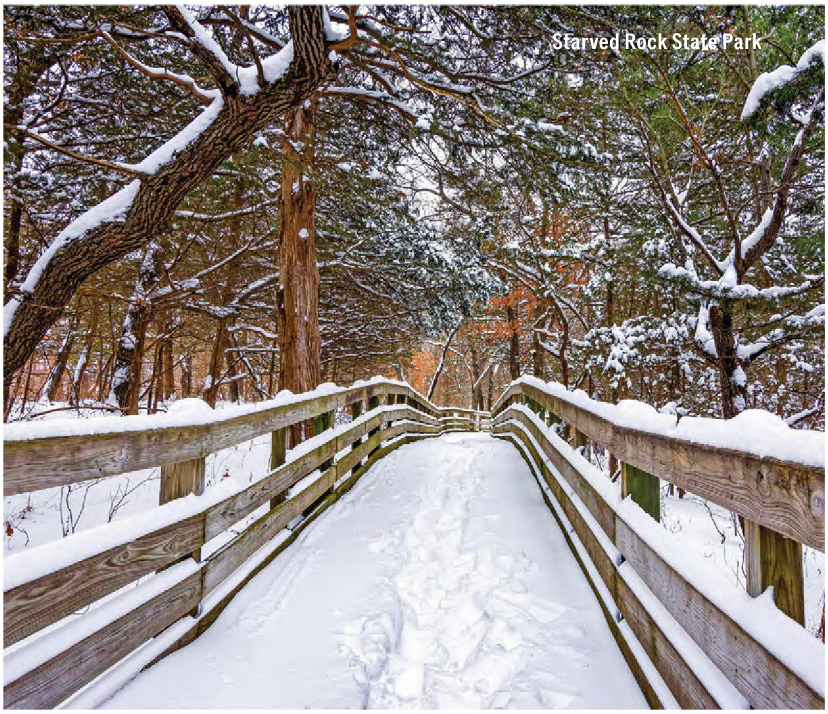
A 67-foot waterfall that tumbles into an icy river is a highlight for hikers who trek the 4-mile, moderate **Rose River Falls Loop Trail** in Shenandoah National Park. After a fresh snowfall, keep your eyes open for tracks from deer, bobcats and owls.

UTAH

The easy, family-friendly 3.3-mile out-and-back **Donut Falls Trail** near Salt Lake City gets its name from the waterfall that tumbles into a cave through a donut-shaped rock at trail's end. You can scramble up the rocks to see the cave, but use caution and be prepared to get your feet wet.

OHIO

A 65-foot waterfall that transforms into icy crystalline ribbons cascading over rocks awaits hikers on the 1.5-mile **Brandywine Gorge Loop Trail** in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. A short boardwalk and steps make this a good choice for families and dogs.


Starved Rock State Park

SNORKELING: CD WHEATLEY/GETTY IMAGES; SNOW SCENE: NICOLA PATTERSON/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Catch the Caribbean vibe in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

ST. THOMAS
The most cosmopolitan and densely populated island, St. Thomas offers a thriving harbor scene, duty-free shopping, luxe resorts and vibrant nightlife.

ST. CROIX
The largest of the islands, St. Croix is less crowded and touristy, with quiet small towns, secluded beaches and rustic charm.

ST. JOHN
Nature lovers flock to St. John's unspoiled beauty for excellent snorkeling on underwater trails, hiking (two-thirds of the island is a national park) and a slow pace that invites relaxation.

visitusvi.com

Visitors watch for wildlife in Florida's Circle B Bar Reserve.

PLACES TO GO

Circle B Bar Reserve

AS MY FAMILY WANDERED the many walking trails in Circle B Bar Reserve, an animal habitat in Lakeland, Florida, we were awestruck by the beauty of the moss-covered oak trees, grassy marshes and peaceful wetlands. We saw turtles and alligators resting along the shoreline of Lake Hancock. And as we listened to the many sounds of the birds, we paused for a moment to watch a magnificent sandhill crane cross the trail in front of us. Four generations of our family appreciated the quiet moment in nature. ◉

FE / Cortnie Goodin Shelton, WA

BOTH PHOTOS THIS PAGE: CORTNIE GOODIN

BRING BINOCULARS

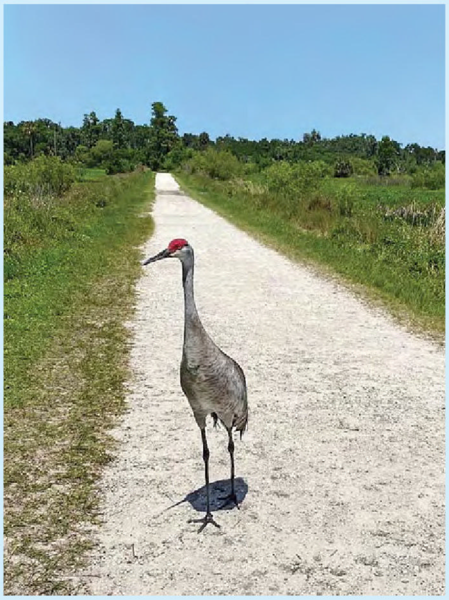
FEATHERED FRIENDS

In 2008, the reserve was added to the Great Florida Birding Trail. Visitors might spy eagles, owls, osprey, herons, moorhens, spoonbills, egrets and other wading birds.

CRITTER SIGHTINGS

In addition to birds, the reserve is home to otters, armadillos, bobcats, foxes, squirrels, frogs and snakes, lizards and other reptiles.

polknature.com



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LANDMARK

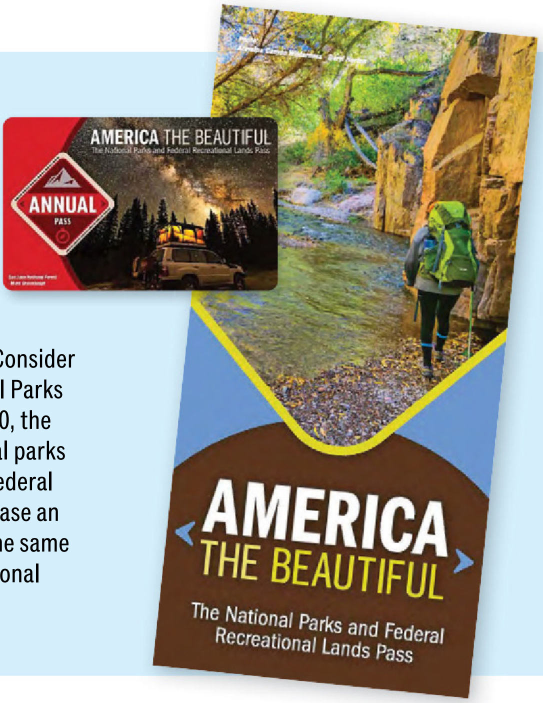
A Seat at History **GREENSBORO, NC**

On Feb. 1, 1960, four young Black students staged a nonviolent sit-in at a whites-only lunch counter at F. W. Woolworth in Greensboro. Today, the International Civil Rights Center & Museum thrives around that same lunch counter. Permanent galleries, artifacts, videos and interactive exhibits tell the story of the civil rights struggle for equality and civic inclusion in the United States. ***sitinmovement.org***

NATIONAL PARKS

Your Pass to Paradise

Planning to visit a few national parks this year? Consider getting an annual America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. For just $80, the pass allows unlimited entrance to all 423 national parks and historical sites, as well as more than 2,000 federal recreation areas. Seniors 62 and older can purchase an annual America the Beautiful Senior Pass with the same access as the regular pass for only $20 ($5 additional online). ***store.usgs.gov/pass***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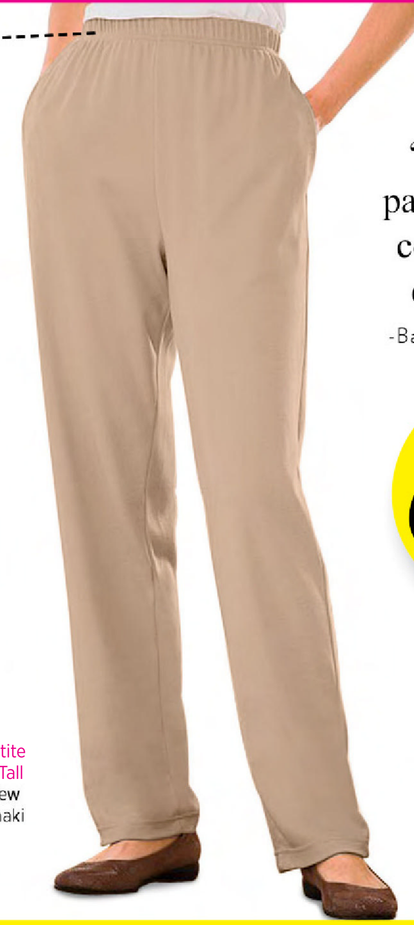

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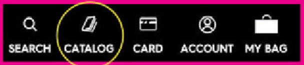

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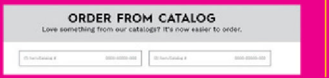
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The Milky Way as seen from the park

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REACH FOR THE STARS

The Dairy State's first dark sky park delivers a dazzling evening show

KATY SPRATTE JOYCE OMAHA, NE

It's a balmy night at the end of the Door County peninsula. As my eyes adjust to the growing darkness, I look toward the night sky. Newport State Park is a special place thanks to its lack of light pollution.

As Wisconsin's first designated dark sky park, Newport's nearly 2,300 acres and 11 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline are best experienced after nightfall. Its dark skies not only protect wildlife during migrations but also allow for stellar outdoor opportunities like stargazing and viewing the northern lights.

"Some of our visitors tell us they had never seen the stars where they live," says Jen Rogers from Destination Door County. "But when you come to Newport and you have a clear night, you're in another world."

Newport is a wilderness park with less infrastructure (such as paved roads or lights) than more developed areas within the state park system. It's best to explore the stargazing areas during the daytime and then circle back for a night session. And, Newport boasts a hidden gem—a small sandy beach perfect for dipping your toes into Lake Michigan's deep blue waters. Since the park

BOTH NIGHT SKY PHOTOS: DENNY MOUTRAY PHOTOGRAPHY

is most popular for its dark sky designation, the beach there is generally not as busy as others in Door County. But, if you do visit at night, it's also a great spot to check out the moon reflecting on the water on a clear night.

METEOR SHOWERS

On the evening of my visit, purely by serendipity, there's a special presentation by University of Wisconsin-Madison astronomy students related to the Perseid meteor shower.

Their high-powered telescope allows the general public to enjoy the Perseids on this peak viewing night. I gather with other star enthusiasts for this unique event, feeling fortunate for the timing of my trip. Though a supermoon (an unusually large and bright moon), slightly thwarts our viewing, it's still impressive and memorable to be part of this small assembly.

After all, there's something about the act of stargazing that inspires quiet contemplation. Generations have looked to the stars for guidance, both in terms of their philosophical aims and for actual directions. On this night, my thoughts have a clear focus, as this Door County weekend is set to be my last trip before I welcome new life into the world.

My due date inches ever nearer while the inky expanse of the evening sky envelops me in her immeasurable embrace. I know that life will never be the same, will never be as simple as it is on this twilight excursion. And somehow, staring into the great beyond, I'm confident everything will be all right. ◉

PLAN YOUR VISIT Learn more about Newport State Park at ***dnr.wisconsin.gov***.

SHORELINE: MARK BALDWIN/GETTY IMAGES

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

STARGAZING

There are three distinct Dark Sky Viewing Areas in the park. The first can be found at the end of Europe Bay Rd., the second near Lot 3, and the third close to Lot 1 and the park office.

PACKING LIST

It's best to bring a chair or a blanket for comfortable stargazing, as there is minimal seating. Use a flashlight or a headlamp with a red filter to protect night vision.

GETTING IN

Vehicles must have a Wisconsin State Parks sticker to access the park. A yearly pass is $28 for an in-state vehicle and $38 for out-of-staters. The daily park fee is $8 for Wisconsin cars and $11 for those from out of state.

NEWPORT
STATE PARK

With its low light pollution, Newport State Park is ideal for stargazing all year long.

GO-TO SPOT: THE BEACH Though covered in snow, the park's shoreline, which spans 11 miles of Lake Michigan, offers views of Newport Bay.

Skaters circle the Main Street Square Ice Rink in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Lace Up Your Skates

Glide across the ice at these popular outdoor rinks | DANA MEREDITH

SOUTH DAKOTA

Head to Rapid City's festive Main Street Square Ice Rink now through early February for public skating seven days a week. A day pass is $7 (skates rent for $5), or take advantage of Two-For-One Tuesdays. Check out the nearby City of Presidents, 43 life-size bronze statues of past presidents. ***mainstreetsquare.org/icerinkrates***

COLORADO

Located in Beaver Creek Village in Avon, the Black Family Ice Rink has mountain views—and traditionally offers free fresh-baked cookies every afternoon at 3 p.m! Fire pits and couches keep skaters comfy off the ice. The rink is open through mid-April. Admission is $5 or $10 with skate rental. ***beavercreek.com***

VIRGINIA

Since 2015, families have flocked to Elmwood Park in downtown Roanoke for WBDJ7's Elmwood on Ice. For a $6 admission (plus $2 for skate rental if needed), guests can skate all day. Vendors are on hand each week to offer food, water and hot beverages. The ice is open through Jan. 29. ***downtownroanoke.org***

KATHLEEN UNGERER

Now, THIS is a Knife!

*This 16" full tang stainless steel blade is not for the faint of heart —now **ONLY** $99!*

In the blockbuster film, when a strapping Australian crocodile hunter and a lovely American journalist were getting robbed at knife point by a couple of young thugs in New York, the tough Aussie pulls out his dagger and says "That's not a knife, THIS is a knife!" Of course, the thugs scattered and he continued on to win the reporter's heart.

Our Aussie friend would approve of our rendition of his "knife." Forged of high grade 420 surgical stainless steel, this knife is an impressive 16" from pommel to point. And, the blade is full tang, meaning it runs the entirety of the knife, even though part of it is under wraps in the natural bone and wood handle.

Secured in a tooled leather sheath, this is one impressive knife, with an equally impressive price.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of $2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include a pair of $99, 8x21 power compact binoculars, *and* a genuine leather sheath **FREE** when you purchase the ***Down Under Bowie Knife***.

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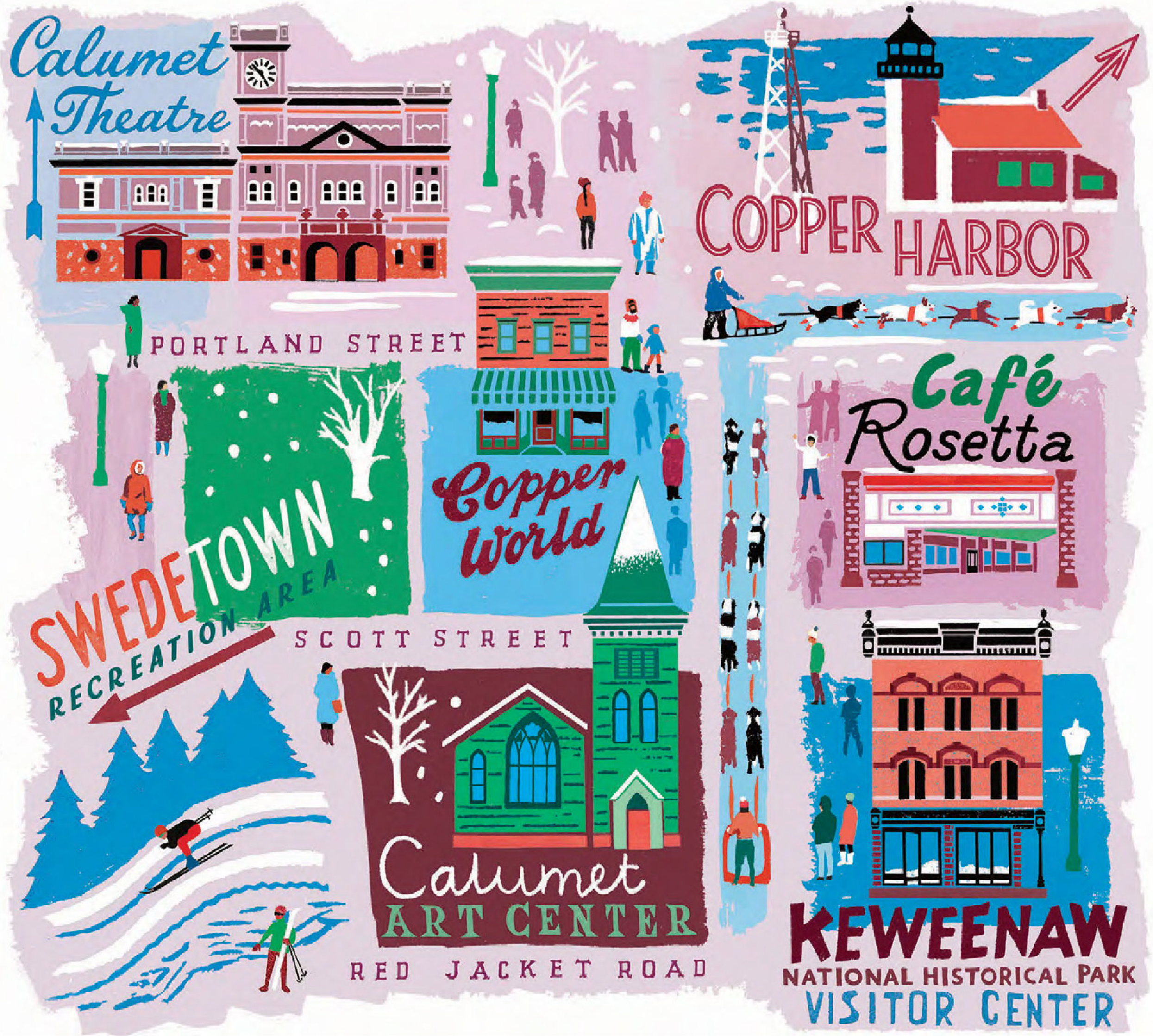

Calumet Theatre
Copper Harbor
Portland Street
Café Rosetta
Copper World
Swedetown
Recreation Area
Scott Street
Calumet
Art Center
Red Jacket Road
Keweenaw
National Historical Park
Visitor Center

STILL BOOMING

Built by immigrant miners, Calumet's cultural legacy endures. **Felicia Schneiderhan** explores the town copper built.

ON THE NORTHERN TIP of Michigan's Upper Peninsula you'll find Calumet, a lovely hamlet with a faraway air and close-knit community spirit that delights both residents and visitors.

The 19th-century copper rush turned the town into a capital of the mining industry, attracting more than 60,000 immigrant miners from Finland, England, Italy and Croatia. They came to a land that once belonged to the Seneca nation (the town's former name, Red Jacket, came from a Seneca chief).

Today, Calumet has fewer than 800 residents (or Yoopers, as folks in the UP are called), and their mixed heritage creates a rich backdrop of cultures and history. The town's mining legacy lives on in buildings made of Jacobsville sandstone, side-by-side homes constructed for the miners, and the many historic mines open for tours.

The town's breathtaking scenic beauty brings visitors for autumn leaves, Lake Superior vistas and every outdoor recreation one could want.

MAP BY ANNA SIMMONS

TRAFFIC FINES DOUBLED IN WORK ZONES

ART ESCAPE

The downtown art district showcases the work of many regional artists. On first Fridays, galleries hold open houses for new installations. Take classes at **Calumet Art Center** and stop by **Copper World** for unique Yooper souvenirs. ***calumetartcenter.com calumetcopper.com***

> ***I love small-town living and going to places where I know people and can have a friendly chat.”***
>
> —Lois Blau, a Calumet resident

PUPPY LOVE

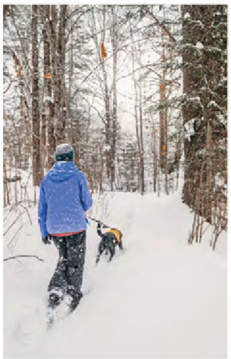
Mushers and dog lovers convene in March for the **Copperdog 150**. First run in 2009, the dog sled race starts downtown and heads north to Copper Harbor and back. It's the final cap to a successful snow season. ***copperdog150.com***

AT THE THEATER

When the **Calumet Theatre** opened its doors in 1900, some of the country's most renowned artists came to perform. Today, the theater presents live music, plays, dances and community events, plus guided tours of this historical local landmark. ***calumettheatre.com***

BELOVED TRAILS

The **Swedetown Recreation Area** is a neighborhood trail system on 1,900 acres offering hiking, sledding, skiing, mountain biking and more. Accessible to all levels, this park delivers nature right in town, as well as enough space for people to find the solace they crave. The **Expedition Inn** rents out small cabins adjacent to the trail system. ***expeditioninn.com***



BREAKFAST & LUNCH
Cafe Rosetta
102 5TH STREET
CALUMET, MI

CAFFEINE FIX

With its rich, varied heritage, it's not surprising that Calumet sips its coffee with artistic flair. **Cafe Rosetta** is the perfect spot to relax with a hot drink or fuel up for your walking, biking or skiing tour of town. The cafe's latte art and baked goods inspire a return visit! ***caferosetta.com***

COPPER RUSH

Go underground on a mining tour, hike the trails or go back in time to see how miners lived, all at **Keweenaw National Historical Park**. The visitors center is the perfect jumping-off point for the 21 sites that make up the park.

DOWNTOWN: ANDRE JENNY/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; ALL OTHER IMAGES PROVIDED BY VISIT KEWEENAW

The cleft of a snow berm shelters this arctic fox (above). Keeping birds away means making a little noise (bottom right).

WINTER SURVIVOR

In the tundras of Alaska, hard-to-spot arctic foxes outwit fans and foes alike. Photographer **Patrick Endres** records their fascinating behavior.

THE FOX'S COAT DARKENS IN SPRING AND SUMMER.

PATRICK ENDRES

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER

Focuses on Alaska's landscapes and wildlife. alaskaphotographics.com

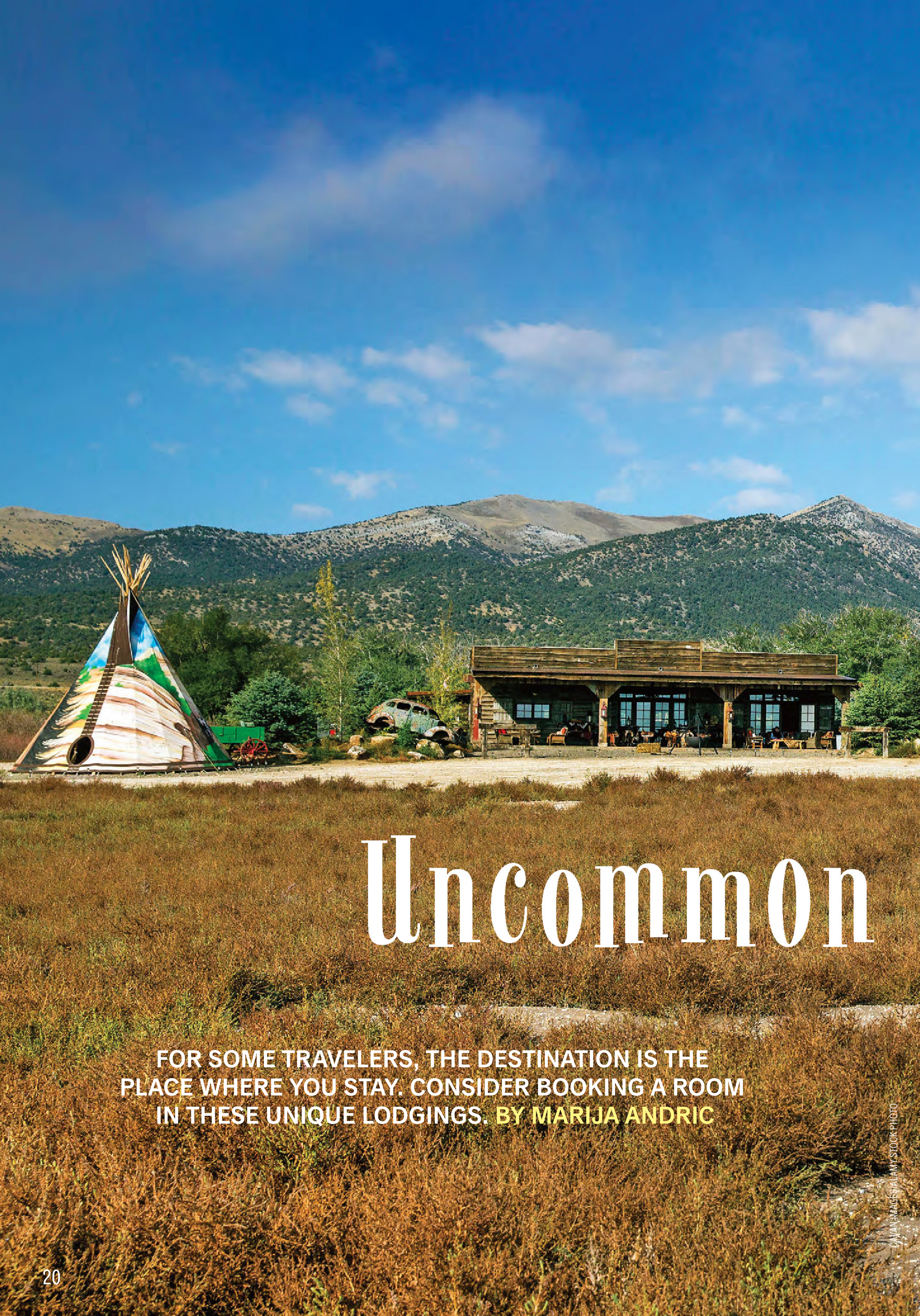
WORTH THE STILLNESS I've waited hours for a sleeping arctic fox to wake up, stretch and open its mouth. That can mean hours of nothing and then a mad burst of the shutter. One has to be patient and willing to capture all forms of fox behavior.

WHERE AND WHEN TO GO These foxes inhabit the far Arctic along the coast. To photograph them requires travel to remote areas, often via plane. October and November are good months, because enough daylight exists and the temperatures are warmer than the deep chill of winter.

CONVENIENT FRIENDS Arctic foxes and polar bears have an interesting relationship called commensalism, which is where only one species (the arctic fox) benefits, while the other (the bear) is unaffected. Arctic foxes travel behind polar bears and scavenge on scraps of food. Survival in the Arctic is tough, and food is hard to come by, especially in the winter when lemmings and other rodents (the arctic fox's typical summer diet) are less accessible. ◉

JUST THE FACTS: ARCTIC FOX

Can be white, brown or even bluish gray depending on the time of year / **Eats small mammals, including voles, mice and birds** / Stays warm thanks to its thick fur coat and fluffy tail / **Pounces on prey through the snow** / Lives in burrows and doesn't hibernate in winter / **Mates for life** / Lives up to six years in the wild



Uncommon

FOR SOME TRAVELERS, THE DESTINATION IS THE PLACE WHERE YOU STAY. CONSIDER BOOKING A ROOM IN THESE UNIQUE LODGINGS. **BY MARIJA ANDRIC**

CAVAN IMAGES/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Mustang Monument Resort gives guests the American West.

Accommodations

Mustang Monument Resort

WELLS, NV

EVERY KID WHO DREAMED of being a cowboy or cowgirl can roam the range, feed wild horses and sleep in a tepee at the Mustang Monument Resort in rugged northeastern Nevada.

Founded by philanthropist Madeleine Pickens, the resort funds efforts to save herds of wild mustangs, a symbol of the American West.

The experience is billed as an American safari, offering encounters with wildlife, as well as archery, hiking, yoga, roping lessons and guided walks in the desert—to name a few of the outdoor adventures.

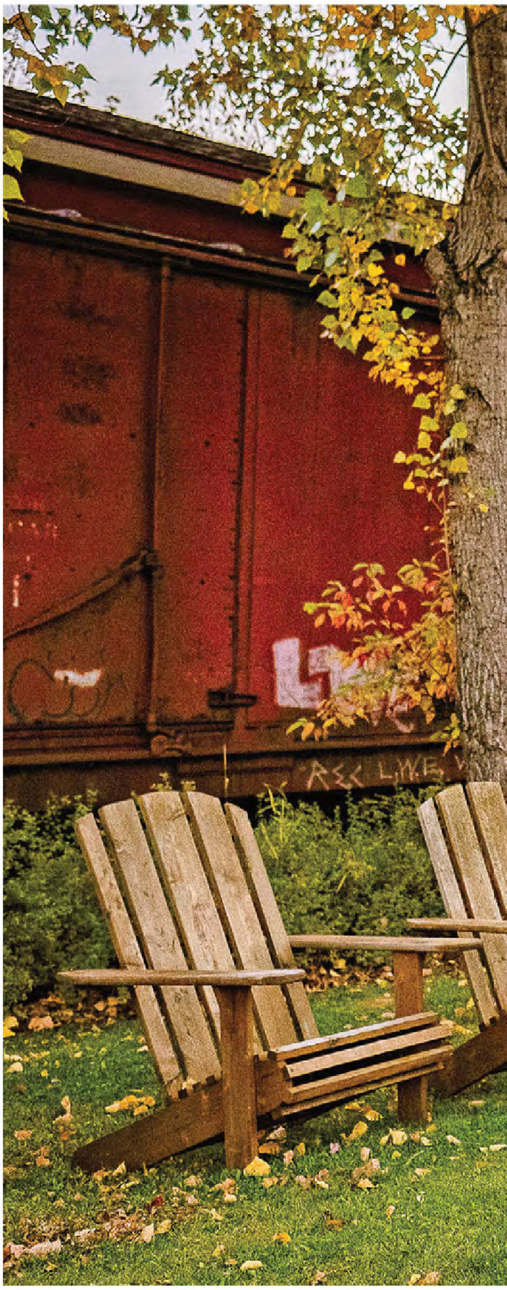
Guests can stay in luxury teepees or comfortable cottages, both decorated in Western style. ***mustangmonument.com***

After a day of outdoor activities (horseback riding, archery or feeding mustangs), glamp in comfy teepees (inset) at the Mustang Monument Resort near Wells, Nevada.

MUSTANG INTERIOR: CAVAN IMAGES/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; TRAINCAR: PHOTO BY JEFF THOMPSON PHOTOGRAPHY

Northern Rail Traincar Inn

TWO HARBORS, MN



SPENDING THE NIGHT in a boxcar is every train lover's dream. At the Northern Rail Traincar Inn, guests can chose from 15 rooms in real boxcars.

"When people drive up they see a rusty-looking boxcar. There are a few who are nervous," says owner Cyndi Ryder. "But when they come inside, it's very lovely."

The boxcars are authentic—original graffiti still covers the exteriors. The interiors are beautifully decorated, and each room has a theme (Victorian, safari and Northwoods, to name a few).

The inn is open year-round. Hikers come in summer for the trails, skiers and snowshoers arrive in winter for the snow. Leaf peepers search in fall for the best foliage. All come to unplug.

"We do get folks who come here in winter just to hang out, play games or knit," Cyndi says.

The inn is located on Minnesota's North Shore. Waterfalls, Split Rock Lighthouse, Duluth and Grand Marais are all within driving distance. ***northernrail.net***

Adirondack chairs invite travelers to sit, turn off their phones and relax at the Northern Rail Traincar Inn.

Big Bay Point Lighthouse

BIG BAY, MI

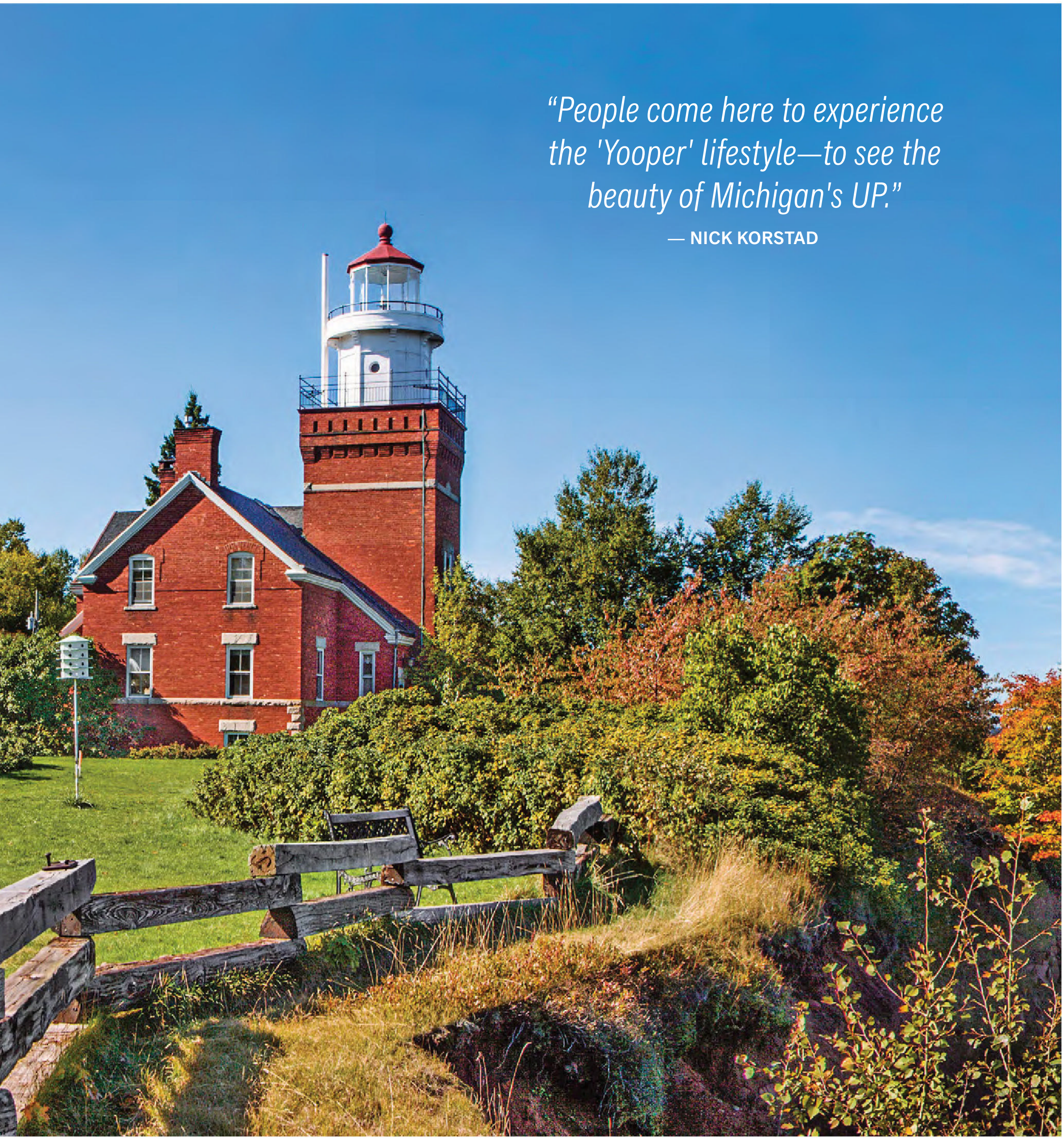
WITH SWEEPING VIEWS of Lake Superior and the Huron Mountains, the Big Bay Point Lighthouse is a remote escape, far from the distractions of the mad, modern world. And that's just how innkeeper and owner Nick Korstad intends to keep it.

"Guests see what it was like to live back in 1896 when it was built. They get to stay in a room with touches of the lighthouse but with modern amenities," says Nick, who took over in 2018.

Located 25 miles north of Marquette on Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the inn is one of the few residential lighthouses left in the United States. Guests choose from rooms dedicated to past keepers and helpers. Breakfast is served daily in the guest rooms.

The light is still operational—it was automated in 1941 and Nick maintains

INTERIORS: BIG BAY LIGHTHOUSE



“People come here to experience the 'Yooper' lifestyle—to see the beauty of Michigan's UP.”

— **NICK KORSTAD**

EXTERIOR: GEOSTILLS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

it for the Coast Guard. From the tower, it's easy to see why the light was a necessity for sailors.

For guests who plan their visit around a stay at the lighthouse, there’s plenty to explore nearby, including five waterfalls in the Yellow Dog watershed, Thomas Rock Scenic Overlook and historic sites such as the Henry Ford Hotel and the Lumberjack Tavern (Jimmy Stewart fans will recognize this as the setting for his film, *Anatomy of a Murder*). ***bigbaylighthouse.com***

Imagine waking up to breakfast in these rooms (inset) and then walking outside to see views that are distinctly Michigan's Upper Peninsula (above).

TRAILER: THE SHADY DELL

INTERIOR: DANITA DELIMONT/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Shady Dell

BISBEE, AZ

LONG BEFORE VAN LIFE was a hashtag, there was Shady Dell Vintage Trailer Court. This retro lovers paradise in Bisbee, Arizona, is the longest continually run trailer court in the U.S. Guests stay in restored trailers from the 1940s and '50s. Think sleek and shiny Airstreams and reliable Spartans with pops of character and color.

"This is how Americans traveled after World War II," says owner Justin Luria. "We get people in their 20s and 30s who are into midcentury glamping, and the older generation who traveled this way as children and want that nostalgia."

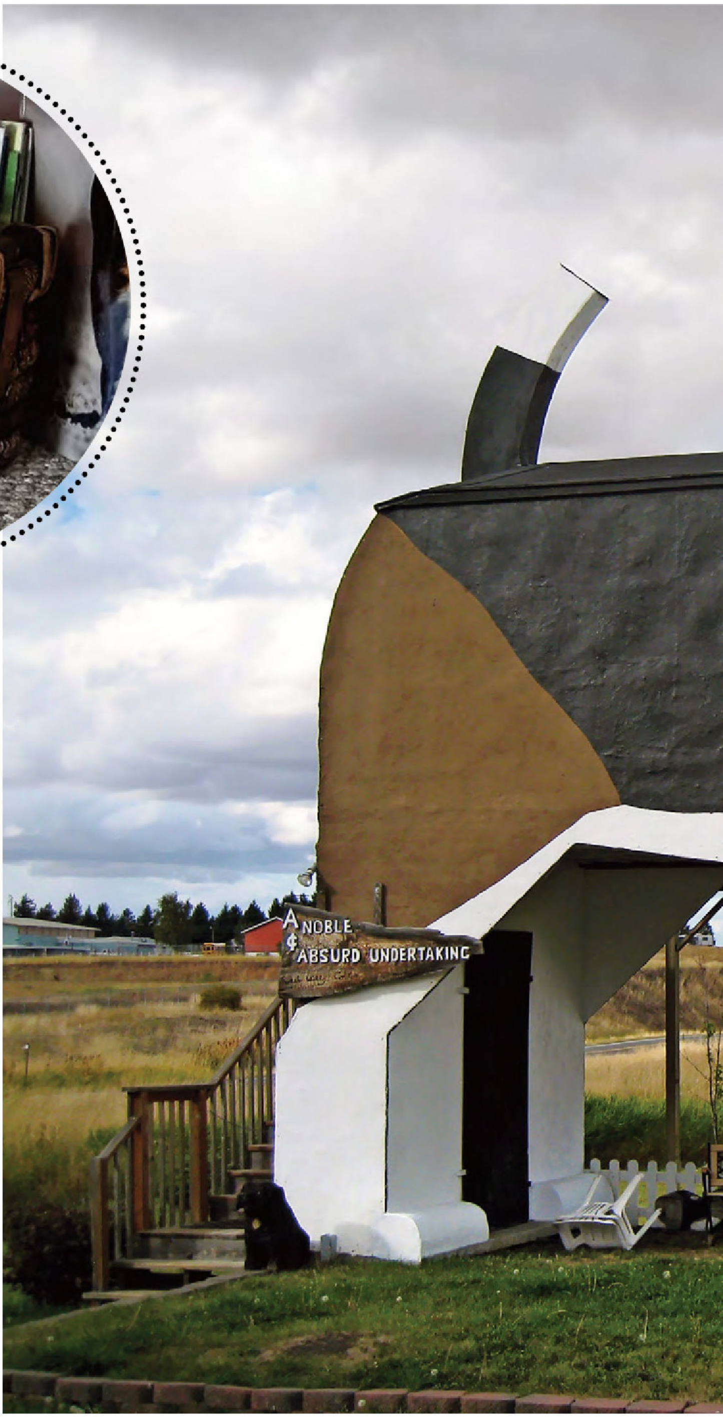
Each trailer is fitted with retro amenities suitable to its era, such as coffee percolators and phonographs with vintage vinyl. Guests can grab a bite at Dot's Diner, a 1957 Valentine diner, that serves burgers and sandwiches.

For guests who want to explore, Bisbee is an idyllic town set in the gorgeous Mule Mountains. "Check out the architecture and meet the locals," Justin says. "There are no small towns like it." ***theshadydell.com***

This 1955 Kenskill (left) embodies the retro vibe that attract travelers to Shady Dell Vintage Trailer Court, where each trailer is decked out for its era (inset).

Dog Bark Park Inn

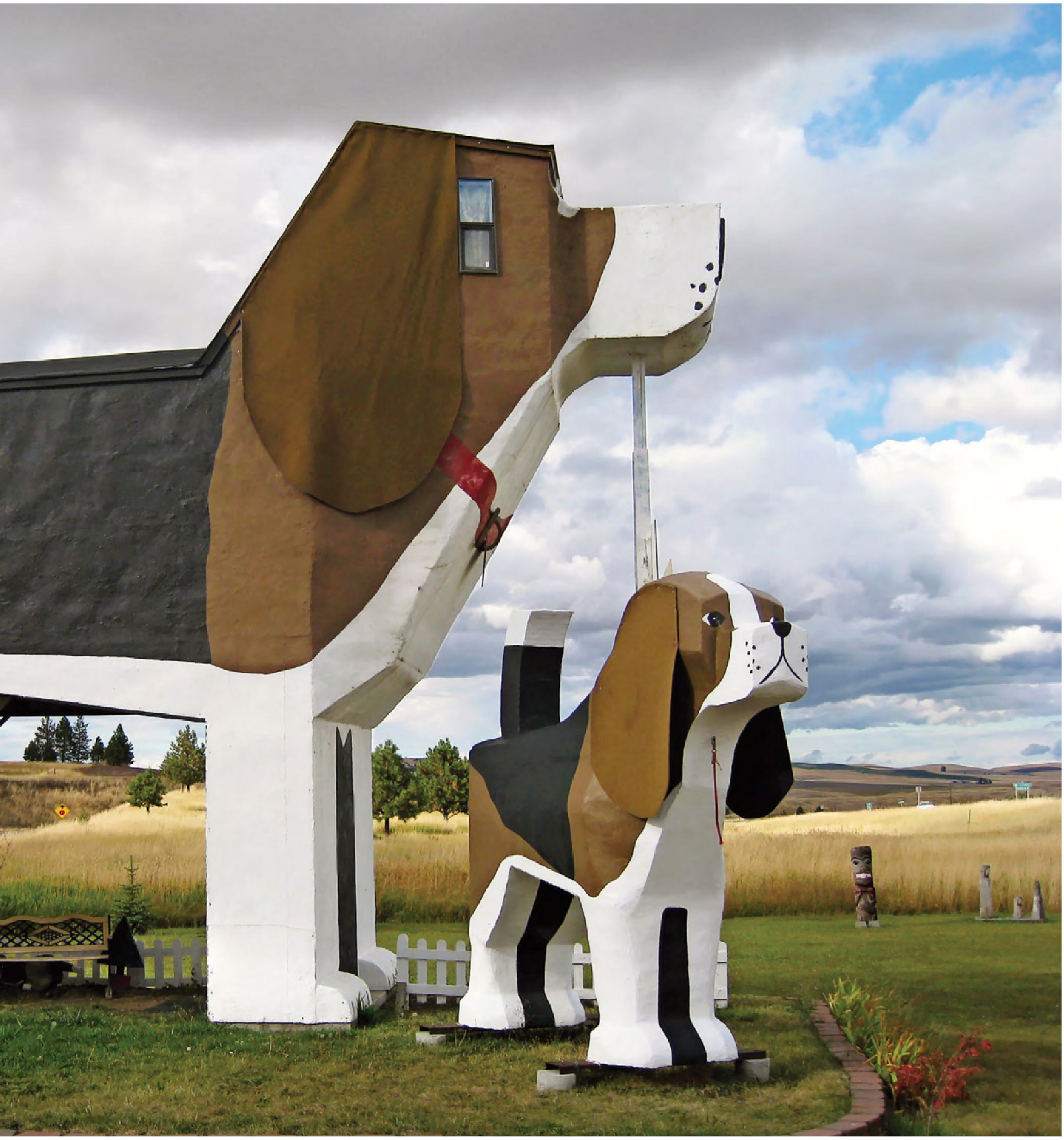
COTTONWOOD, ID



SOMETIMES IT'S OK to sleep in a doghouse. In fact, it's a reward at the Dog Bark Park Inn. Dubbed the "world's largest beagle," the roadside attraction in Idaho has only one room and treats guests to starry nights, 360-degree views of the prairie, and goodies—all made with local ingredients—such as muffins, coffee breads and granola (the recipe has been in owner Frances Conklin's family for 55 years). And, the rooms are filled with dog art created by Frances and her husband, Dennis Sullivan. Though booking a room can be difficult (each season sells out quickly), travelers can stop at the inn, browse the grounds and gift shop and see the artists at work.

Those who venture beyond the dog house will find outdoor recreation opportunities such as rafting and

ALL PHOTOS: DOG BARK PARK



hiking in the nearby Hell's Canyon of the Snake River. ***dogbarkpark.com***

Dog decor (inset) is everywhere inside the Giant Beagle (above) at Dog Bark Park Inn.

> *"It's lovely that people like to experience small towns and byways and see the uniqueness of our country."*
>
> — **FRANCES CONKLIN**

Quiet Winter

Kelsey Ogletree discovers that the best time to see Yellowstone National Park is when the temperatures drop and the crowds stay home

JOHN MORRISON/GETTY IMAGES

An early breakfast is the first order of business for this moose.

ENTERING MONTANA

If crawling along a narrow road behind dozens of other vehicles—the sun glinting hot off the roof of your car as you and hundreds of other tourists crane your necks to snap a photo of a bison—doesn't sound like a walk in the park, it's time to think about Yellowstone in not only a new light, but a new season. Many don't realize that Yellowstone is open throughout the winter—and not only is it open, but it's easily at its best during the colder months. Fewer people means more animals roaming about, and there's nothing quite as enchanting as a fresh blanket of snow that insulates the ground and dampens the sounds so you can appreciate the quiet charm of winter. I learned this firsthand visiting the park in freezing weather last year.

LANDSCAPE: MARK PERRY/500PX/GETTY IMAGES

Snowfall transforms the Yellowstone landscape (left) making it easier to spot otters (top) and herds of bison (above).

BISON: LAURA HEDIEN/GETTY IMAGES; OTTER: JARED LLOYD/GETTY IMAGES

A sprinkle of soft flakes was in the air as the sun rose on our drive into the park. I was spellbound watching the bighorn sheep ogling us from mere yards above the road, herds of pronghorn darting across the landscape and bison lazily lounging across the prairie. Even though the temperature was in the single digits, I rolled down my window to breathe in the sharp air, wanting to feel at one with the land that magical morning.

From December through March, the only park entrance that's open to private vehicles is the North Entrance in Gardiner, Montana. Known as the Roosevelt Arch, it was constructed in the early 1900s and dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt. This means you'll get to experience the park from the Treasure State side, which is often less explored than its Wyoming counterpart. Located about 80 miles from Bozeman (and its airport, which now has direct flights from many U.S. destinations on seven major carriers), the drive from the city to the park is spectacular, especially when the terrain is covered in snow.

WILDLIFE WONDERS

The most compelling reason to visit in winter, besides the absence of crowds, is the wildlife. Many of the species that call this sanctuary home are more active during the colder months, migrating from higher elevations to lower ground with less snow, as I glimpsed on my own winter

FERRANTRAITE/GETTY IMAGES

A geyser blows off steam in the chilly air.

visit. Animals I saw in abundance in the park included elk, bison, bighorn sheep, pronghorn (often mistaken for antelope) and coyotes (regularly misidentified as wolves). If they're lucky, visitors may also see fox, moose, short-tailed weasels and even river otters along the icy riverbanks.

I wasn't fortunate enough to come across any of these creatures on my trip, though I did spot through binoculars a black bear and her two cubs playing outside their den. It's a moment I will not soon forget.

Of course, wolves are one of the most coveted animals sightings in Yellowstone, and winter offers the best chance of it, as it's the wolves' mating season. During my visit, my group and I spent a few hours on the prowl for a wolf pack, tuning into the radio to see if any other visitors had spotted them. The daylight ran out before we had any luck, but that's just one more reason to plan a return trip later in winter. In February, wolves regularly roam and seek each other out, so they're easier to find. Currently, Yellowstone is home to three wolf packs, including several females that had pups in 2022.

Currently, Yellowstone is home to three wolf packs, including several females that had pups in 2022.

It's very possible to see a variety of animals while exploring the park on your own, but you're more likely to spot all the creatures you're hoping to see on a guided tour. Yellowstone Safari Company offers a slate of full-day and multiday winter safari tours from November through April. They'll pick you up at your location in or around Bozeman or Big Sky, and knowledgeable guides—such as biologist Grant Johnson, a tour-group favorite—will curate a customized tour through Yellowstone based on your interests. Want to snap a photo with a field full of bison behind you? Capture a video of a fox

Below: Wolves howl as snow falls gently. Right: Geothermal features put on a colorful show.

WOLVES: JUDILEN/GETTY IMAGES; LANDSCAPE: LAURA HEDIEN/GETTY IMAGES

Yellowstone is the perfect example of a winter wonderland.

— RENEE LUND, READER

darting across the snowy landscape? Spot a black bear or a wolf pack in their natural habitat? Let your guide know exactly what you'd like to see, and they'll drive you to the spots best known for those animals. Another benefit: Having a driver allows you to savor the views and the ride without worrying about often-icy or snow-packed roads. I thoroughly enjoyed my tour with Grant and the immense depth of knowledge he shared about the park and the animals within it.

The delicious breakfast muffin and hot coffee they had waiting for me in the morning, as well as the hearty boxed lunch that I enjoyed around midday, were nice perks too.

FIRE AND ICE

In addition to the wildlife, don't miss the favorite spots to visit in Yellowstone in winter. Mammoth Hot Springs becomes even more fascinating when it's frosty, as the steam rises and freezes onto rocks and trees nearby—quite a sight to behold.

Be sure to wear sturdy boots to walk along the boardwalks above the steaming hydrothermal features, or drive around the travertine terraces, which are hot springs rising through limestone. If you are feeling adventurous, try cross-country skiing or snowmobiling nearby.

Another way to see Yellowstone from a different perspective is to book a tour with a snowcoach, which looks like a shuttle van on extra-large tires or tracks. You're able to stay warm and cozy inside the vehicle while seeing parts of the park that would otherwise be inaccessible during winter. Snowcoaches can navigate unplowed roads throughout the park where cars cannot. In winter, this is the

KIDS: RAMIRO OLACIREGUI/GETTY IMAGES

only way to reach Old Faithful, the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone and Old Faithful Snow Lodge, one of two hotels in the park that are open in winter.

A few more things to keep in mind when visiting Yellowstone during its least-populated season: Roads can be icy, so drive slowly and cautiously. Bundle up, as temperatures range from 0 to 20 degrees during the day, but can dip lower. Watch for wildlife on the roads and use the pullouts to take photos. Stay 25 yards away from most animals and 100 yards for bears and wolves. Services throughout the park are very limited, so pack extra food, water and clothing layers in case of an emergency.

While it takes a little extra planning and more layering and bundling, a winter visit is worth the effort to see Yellowstone bedazzle with winter magic. ◉

Bundling up helps these children stay warm as they play in the snow at Yellowstone.

SNOWFLAKES: ALEKSANDARVELASEVIC/GETTY IMAGES

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

WHAT'S OPEN

The North Entrance is the only way to enter Yellowstone in winter. The Albright Visitor Center and Mammoth Campground are open year-round. Seven warming shelters, including several with water and restrooms, are open December through mid-March for skiers, snowshoers and snowmobilers.

FEES

A single-day pass for a private vehicle costs $35. Individual access (such as in a guided tour) is $20/person. Motorcycle or snowmobile passes are $30. Guests have free access to Yellowstone National Park on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which in 2023 falls on Jan. 16.

WHERE TO STAY

Within the park, two hotels are open for winter stays through March 5, 2023: Old Faithful Snow Lodge and Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel and Cabins. In downtown Bozeman, Kimpton Armory Hotel Bozeman, inside a former armory, and RSVP Hotel, a restored motor lodge, are both nice options within walking distance of shops and restaurants. ***yellowstonenationalparklodges.com***

Learn more at ***nps.gov/yell.***

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Massive rock formations interrupt the landscape in Monument Valley.
FE / DANA FOREMAN PENROSE, CO

NAVAJO COUNTRY ADVENTURE

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FE / DANA FOREMAN
PENROSE, CO

In March of 2021, my husband, Lindsay, my mother-in-law, Beth, and I took a trip to the Four Corners region, specifically the Utah-Arizona border. That trip brought me right back to my best childhood memories.

When I was young, I fell in love with the vast, dusty landscapes of the old classic Westerns I watched on TV or at the movies. Back in those days, playtime for me meant daydreaming and pretending to ride out West on my stick horse. I would gallop around my Louisiana home and hide behind big oak trees—pretending the tree was a butte or boulder—in wait of a bandit. I practiced my roping skills using my play lasso to rope my dog. My dreams of the West often got me in trouble. Several times I accidentally set our pastures on fire by lighting a little pile of sticks while pretending I was camping on a mesa.

Those fond memories and the present day collided as I stared into the distance at the Valley of the Gods near Mexican Hat, Utah. The sandstone valley lies north of Monument Valley Tribal Park across the San Juan River. Later, I heard some locals refer to the area as the "mini Monument Valley" to describe all the monoliths, pinnacles and rock formations in this lesser-known area.

The day was magical as we were driven to areas within the park only accessible to the Navajo nation.

VALLEY VIEWS

We spent an afternoon driving the 17-mile loop road through the Valley of the Gods, which is maintained by the Bureau of Land Management. Unlike for Monument Valley, permits are not required and there are no fees to drive through. The loop road offers views that bring to life the Old West and countless opportunities for keepsake photographs.

We spent our evenings relaxing at the Desert Rose Resort in Bluff, Utah, where we had rented a cozy cabin for the weekend. The locals were so friendly that they made us feel right at home.

The next morning we loaded up our gear and drove into Monument Valley Tribal Park for a sunrise tour. We chose Dineh Bekeyah Tours and were ably led by Harry Nez, our Navajo guide. The day was magical as we were driven to areas within the park only accessible to the Navajo nation.

ALL PHOTOS: DANA FOREMAN

Dana poses in front of the iconic view of Monument Valley (opposite). Relics of life in the Old West (above) and a tourist-savvy pup added joy to the journey.

The earthy fragrance of sage reminded me we were indeed in the heart of America's Southwest. The coral grains of sand in the valley were tiny and soft. As the sun rose, the rock formations glowed a rich orange.

For our next adventure, we saddled up mustangs belonging to the Roy Black's Guided Tours and Peterson, our Navajo guide, led us on the trail ride of a lifetime. He entertained us by singing songs in his native language while pointing out rock formations resembling eagles, thunderbirds, bears and other wildlife. The fine red sands provided soft ground for the horses as they carried us into the narrow canyons and out into the wide open vistas. These mustangs were built for life in Monument Valley. The highlight of the tour for me was riding through a small band of wild mustangs. The herd stallion stood proudly watching us as we carefully passed among the mares without incident. Touring the valley in a 4x4 vehicle the day before was great, but it didn't compare to traveling by horseback on the back of a mustang!

Before departing Monument Valley, we stopped off at John Ford's Point for some panoramic photos. Later we visited the location of a scene from the movie *Forest Gump.* (Remember where Tom Hanks ran on the road with Monument Valley in the background?) It was there that I photographed a sly dog waiting for tourists to stop for photos. I soon learned the reason, as tourists tossed snacks to that smart pup!

NAVAJO TRADITIONS

I learned so much on this trip, but most of all, I appreciated learning facts about the Navajo shared by our guides. The Navajo people call themselves *Diné,* which means "the people." The word *ya'at'eeh*, pronounced (yah-ah-tay) means "hello" or "it is good" in Navajo.

The Navajo people are very superstitious, so there is a long list

Riding horses through Monument Valley Tribal Park was a trip highlight for Dana and her family.

of don'ts to keep their people safe from harm. For example, don't point at a rainbow or throw rocks into the wind. Don't look at clouds that move slowly or rivers that move rapidly, and never stare at the moon. Watch out for tricksters and the night creatures. Don't whistle at night.

I learned about the heroism of the Navajo Code Talkers who received Congressional Gold Medals for their bravery during World War II. I also learned that Navajo people love to joke and are credited with making up the first mother-in-law jokes. Navajo elders traditionally did not use calendars or clocks, because their perception of time is different—for them, time ebbs and flows with nature, daylight and moonlight, and with the seasons.

Time certainly stood still for me while I visited these landmarks, living out my childhood dreams of riding through the places where John Ford directed many of the Westerns I had watched as a kid. On this magical trip, I was the one who got to be John Wayne for a couple of days.

LEARN, STAY AND PLAY

Hitch a Ride

Offering a variety of guided vehicle tours, **Dineh Bekeyah Tours** introduces you to the scenic wonders of the Monument Valley area. Learn about the Navajo culture and see sites in the backcountry that are only accessible with a guide.

Get Some Shut-Eye

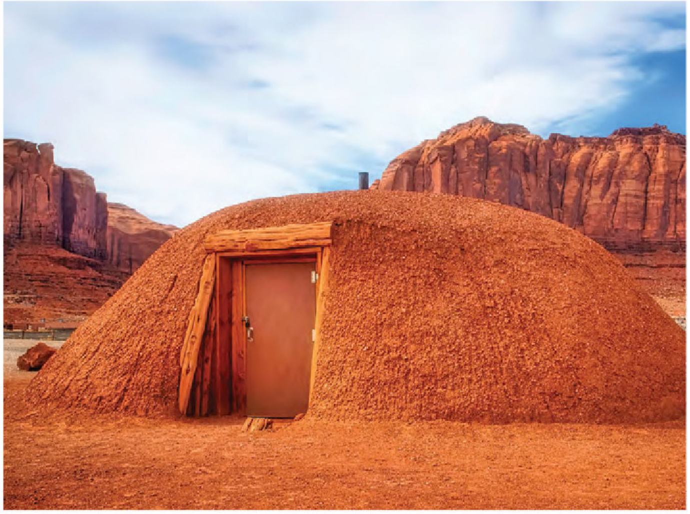
Centrally located between the famous parks of Utah and Arizona, the **Desert Rose Resort & Cabins** in Bluff, Utah, attracts visitors from around the world. Book a getaway in a single or deluxe lodge, a cabin or a courtyard suite to be close to all the nearby desert attractions.

Be a Cowboy

Hop into the saddle for a guided horse tour past arches, petroglyphs, Navajo dwellings and scenic mesas with **Roy Black's Guided Tours.** Jeep tours are also available.

Navajo Homesteads

Many Navajo people still live in **hogans**, round structures without internal posts, made of mud packed against wood timbers. The door of a hogan faces eastward to welcome the rising sun, which the Navajo believe brings good fortune and wealth. Fireplaces are used at night, and in the hot months, water is put on the outside mud walls for a "cool down" effect. Many modern hogans are used for ceremonial purposes today.



Traditional Navajo homes, called hogans, are round structures packed with mud.

IF YOU GO

- ***desertroseinn.com***
- ***dinehbekeyahtours.com***
- ***rbgthorsejeep.com***

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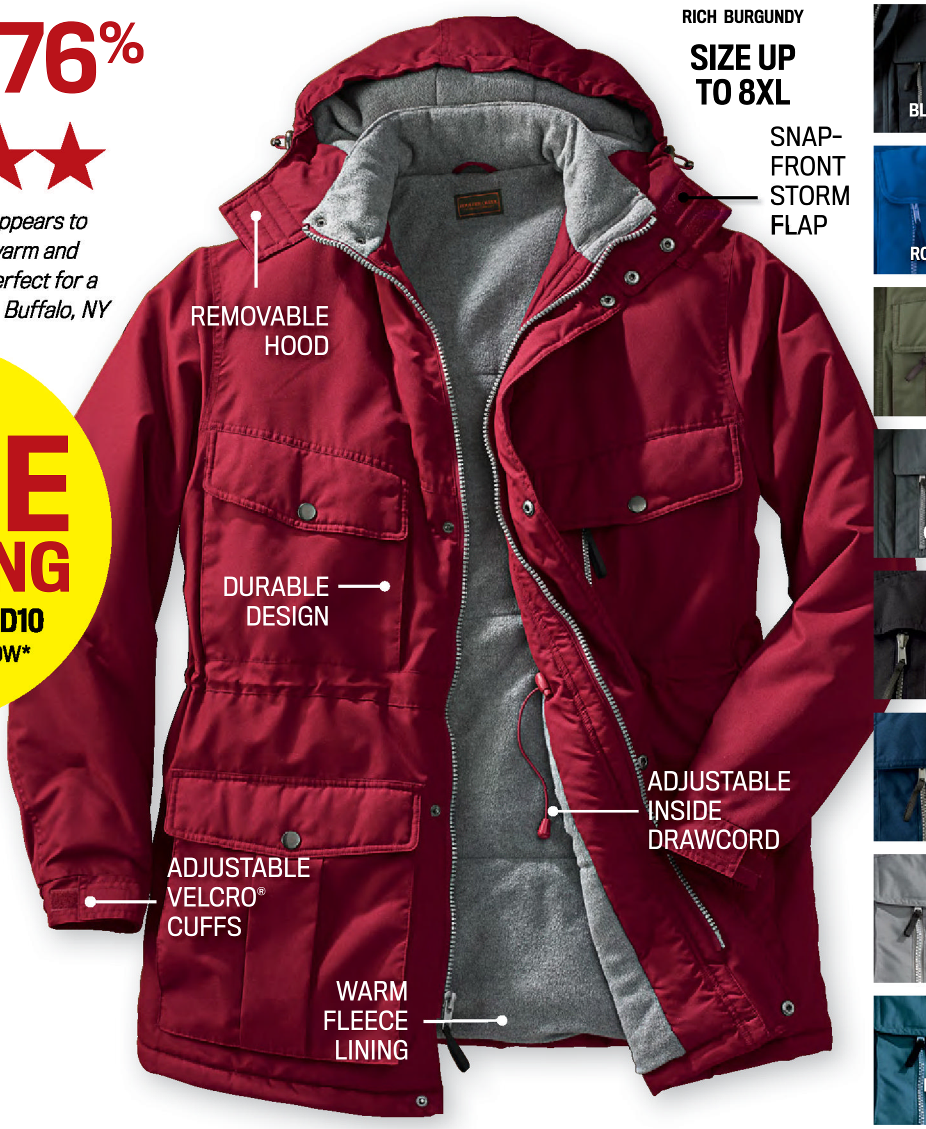
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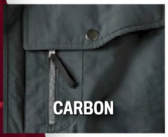

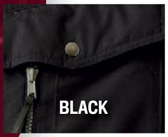

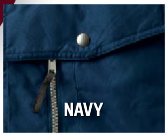

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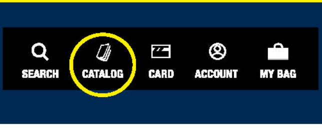
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A COUNTRY RETREAT

Blessed with pristine woodlands and wide-open spaces, North Dakota's Pembina Gorge is a couple's getaway.

DAVID PAUKERT MICHIGAN, ND

My wife, Amy Jo, and I are fortunate to have a cottage in the Pembina Gorge, a quiet place where we can get away to decompress, relax and reenergize.

The Pembina Gorge is located in the northeastern part of North Dakota near the town of Walhalla and is part of what is known as the Rendezvous Region. It is an outdoor lovers paradise with an uninterrupted stretch of 12,500 wildly scenic woodland acres. The area is a four-season destination.

Our little corner of heaven in the gorge was named Chokecherry Ridge by Amy Jo's mother, Ora Marie, who first purchased the property in the mid-1970s.

She bought a used mobile home and transformed it, building bunk beds where the bathtub used to be, replacing light fixtures with kerosene lamps and turning a furnace room into a water closet.

Although it lacked amenities like electricity and running water, Ora Marie made the home as cozy and comfortable as possible.

In 2010, when Ora Marie passed away, Amy Jo and I took over the property and began our adventure in the Pembina Gorge.

We replaced the old mobile home with a small 1920s Sear's kit house, restoring it and turning it into our Swedish cottage. Amy Jo and I relish the time we spend there absorbing nature's beauty.

NATURAL WONDERS

They say that the Rendezvous Region is "steeped in history and blessed with beauty." Ancient

OVERLOOK: DAVID PAUKERT; MOUNTAIN BIKERS: NORTH DAKOTA PARKS & RECREATION

waves of people, water, flora and fauna have migrated through this historic and scenic area since the Cretaceous age, when an ancient sea covered this area and the entire Great Plains. Just west of Walhalla, tourists see a landscape once dominated by an ancient sea. Here, ferocious marine reptiles from 90 million years ago, such as mosasaurs and other sea creatures, have been unearthed. The ancient sea's beaches can still be seen by those with a keen eye.

Because the Pembina Gorge has not been ruined by modern-day developments, the flora and fauna in the area are internationally significant. Hundreds of species of rare, threatened and endangered birds and plants are of great interest to birders, biologists and nature enthusiasts.

One way to see the best of the Pembina Gorge is to take a drive along the Rendezvous Region Scenic Byway, a 22-mile scenic route that begins on County Highway 55 near Vang and winds its way south to State Highway 5.

Frost Fire Park is the central hub of four-season fun in the gorge. It is home to the finest ski and snowboarding area in North Dakota, as well as a new mountain-biking terrain park. The park has hosted summer musical theater productions in an outdoor amphitheater for 38 years.

Adventure seekers throughout North Dakota and surrounding states travel to Pembina Gorge Recreation Area for 30 miles of trails for horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling and off-highway vehicles, as well as access to water sports.

And, the drive takes visitors to a few overlooks where the beauty of the gorge is laid out before them. The Masonic Scenic Overlook in Walhalla and the Tetrault State Forest Overlook have stunning views of the entire gorge.

Surrounded by so much beauty, our home is a country retreat. ◉

VISIT Learn more about Pembina Gorge and the Rendezvous Region at *rendezvousregion.com*.

Mountain biking is popular Pembina Gorge State Recreation Area. Hikers see a grand view at the Tetrault State Forest Lookout Point (left).

MORE TO EXPLORE

Camp Out

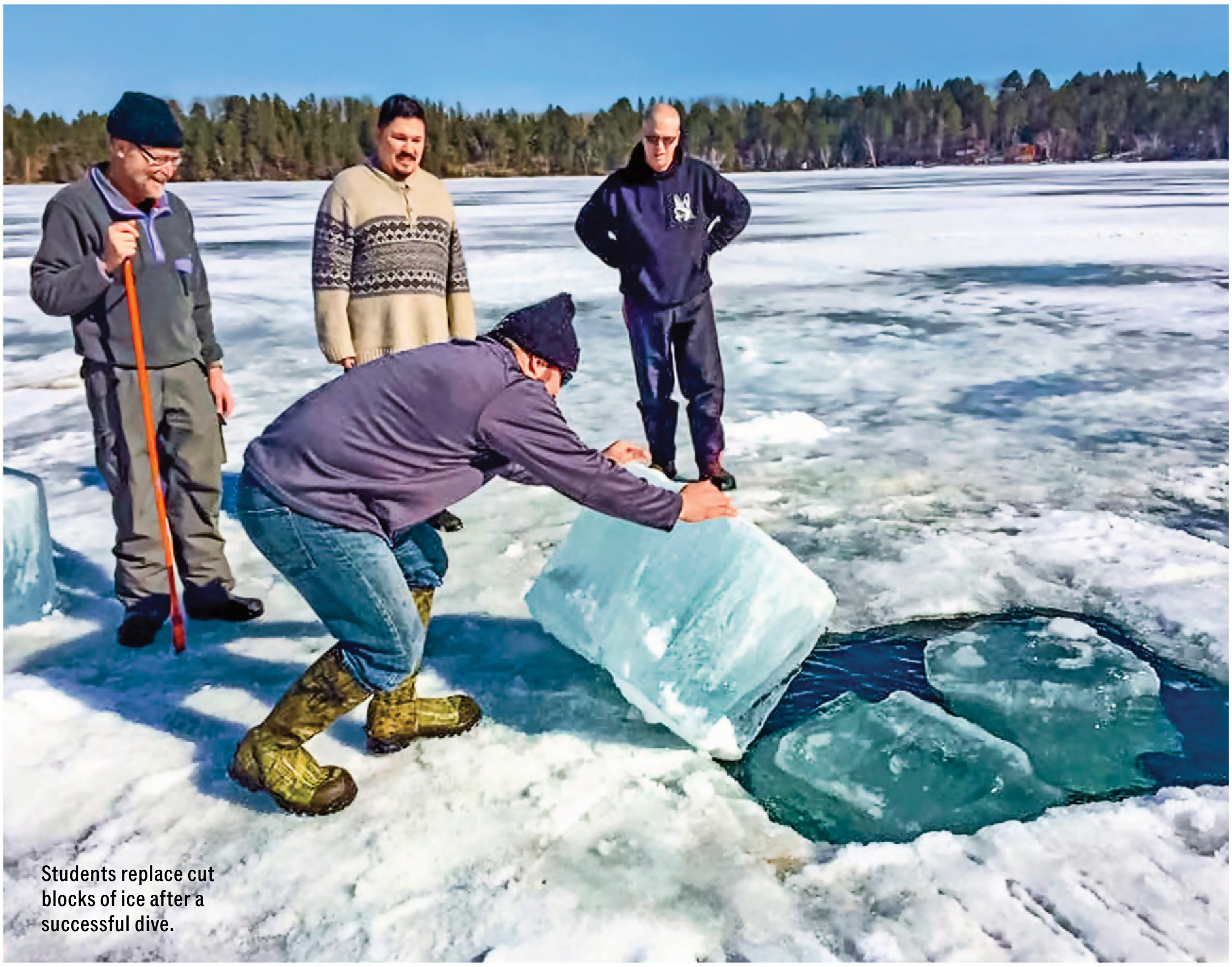
Located on the shores of Lake Renwick, Icelandic State Park offers an array of recreational opportunities including camping, nature walks, boating, swimming and fishing, while snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are popular in the winter. Don't miss the Pioneer Heritage Center when you visit.

Pioneer Days

Northeast of Walhalla, you can take a self-guided tour of the Gingras Trading Post State Historic Site, the 1840s home and trading post of legislator and businessman Antoine Blanc Gingras. A prominent fur trader, Gingras developed a chain of trading posts extending across northern Dakota Territory and southern Manitoba.

Preserving the Past

Step into a pioneer village and experience life in 1800s North Dakota at the Pembina County Museum and Pioneer Machinery Museum. There are 11 buildings on the museum grounds, including a historic church, an 1882 homestead, a barn, a blacksmith shop, a granary, a schoolhouse and a train depot, as well as many examples of restored farm equipment. The main museum houses exhibits and a research library. Admission is free.



Students replace cut blocks of ice after a successful dive.

Under the Ice

Determination and a frozen lake make a chilly achievement possible

FE / KALLIE KANTOS INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MN

Sometimes the only way to conquer a fear is to face it head-on. Growing up in International Falls, Minnesota, I spent a lot of time on the water, even when it was frozen.

Although I had obtained my basic scuba certification while I was in high school, I didn't dive for many years. Recently, I decided to start diving again—but in the winter. I thought it would be interesting, but scary, to try ice diving, and wanted to become a certified ice diver, a specialty certification offered through the Professional Association of Diver Instruction. I enrolled at Mick's Scuba, a dive shop in Moorhead, Minnesota, and took the course.

The divemasters and our group of students stayed at a large cabin at a lake outside of Park Rapids. The divemasters selected a good place to dive. We immediately went to work cutting the ice, which was approximately 2 feet deep, and setting up the warming shelter. The divemasters drilled nine holes with an ice auger, three across and three down, and we connected the holes with ice saws. We were then instructed to shovel snow off the ice in the form of a cross radiating from the area where we had cut the ice. This was to help us navigate underwater. The sun would shine through the shoveled areas and direct the divers to the entry point.

LEARNING THE ROPES

The first night, we watched some videos and the divemaster gave us instructions. Ice diving has its own unique requirements, dangers and rules, which include knowing where your partner is and knowing the rope signals, a diver's lifeline

KALLIE KANTOS

to the surface. The person on the surface signals the diver at regular intervals to assure safety. If a diver does not respond with the correct signal, something could be terribly wrong.

During ice diving certification, I was tethered together with the other students by a rope, as well as being tethered to a long rope on the surface. I completed multiple underwater tests so the instructors could assess my ability.

The majority of the divers in my class were certified dry suit divers from law enforcement who were taking the class as part of their jobs. I was one of two students who dove in wetsuits. Dry suit divers may get wet, but not to the extent of wetsuit divers. So I wore boots, gloves and a hood, and had my ankles and wrists duct taped to trap the warm water that had been poured down my back.

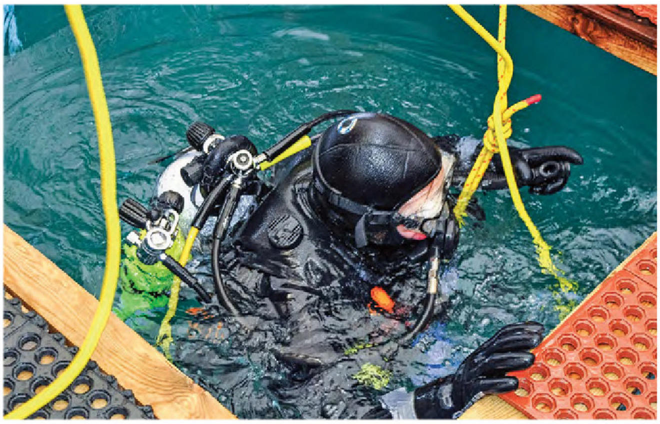
But it was still cold. The surface temperature was 33 degrees, and in the water it was 39 degrees. After lowering myself into the water, I descended approximately 20 feet to the bottom of the lake and explored my surroundings.

Though there wasn't much to look at, the experience was amazing and serene. Unlike other times of the year when motorboats churn the water, all is calm in winter. A canopy of ice protects the water from the wind, so the only things that disrupt the water are divers and moving living creatures.

Looking up at the ice from underneath gave me a unique perspective. The underside of the ice was smooth. When I exhaled, tiny bubbles rose to the surface, collected under the ice and found their way to the hole that we'd cut for the divers to enter the water.

After everyone passed the required tests and minimum dives, we headed to the cabin to change. Once we were dry and warm, we went back out onto the ice to grab the remainder of the gear, take down the warming shelter, take a group photo and place what remained of the chunks of ice back into the water. To ensure the safety of those on the lake, the area around the hole was marked off.

I spent a total of 66 minutes under the ice during those two days. I had a great group of people to dive with. I'm glad I didn't let my fear and dislike of the cold stop me. I realized that some fear is good, but most of it is unfounded—at least that was the case for me. Would I do it again? Yes! ◉



Kallie gathers her courage and descends into the frigid water.

DIVER PHOTOS: ROY OLSON

KALLIE'S ICE DIVING TIPS

- Don't let fear stop you from doing something you really want to do.
- If you are someone who usually gets cold easily, get certified as a dry suit driver before taking an ice diving certification course.
- If you're ice diving in a wetsuit, wear a form-fitting hood, gloves and boots.
- Do not attempt ice diving if you are claustrophobic.
- It is essential to trust your diving partners and the divemaster.
- Bring a GoPro camera to record your achievement. Be sure to pack extra batteries, because the cold shortens battery life.
- Learn about diving at *padi.com*

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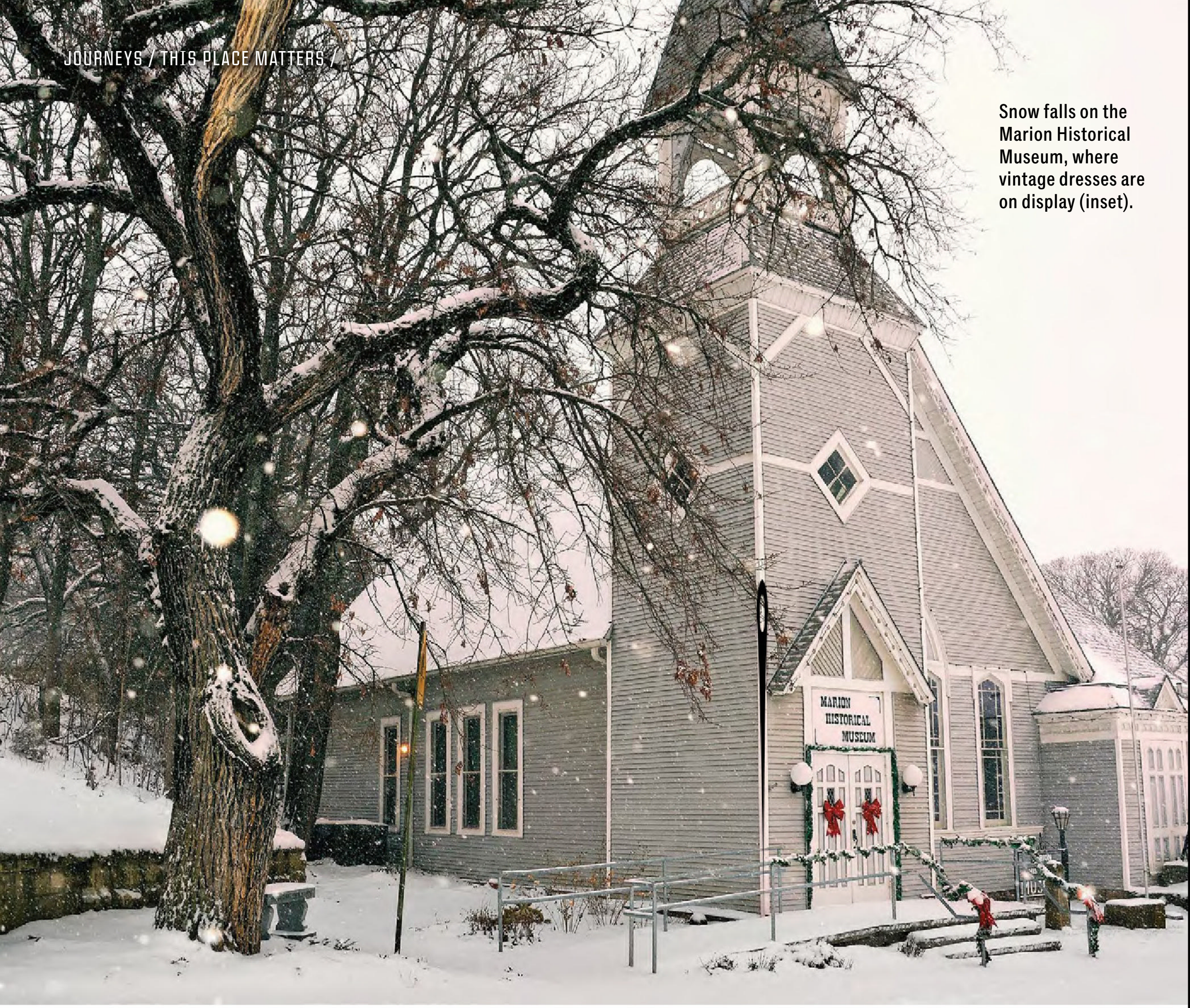

Snow falls on the Marion Historical Museum, where vintage dresses are on display (inset).

FAMILY HISTORY

A connection to the past gives this small-town museum a special place in her heart

FE / JENNIFER BROADSTREET HESS MARION, KS

HOUSED IN A former church that my father's family attended for years, the Marion Historical Museum in Kansas is dear to me.

The cheerful museum is worth a visit to see the many exhibits and the elaborate stained-glass window in the old church sanctuary. On display are 19th-century dresses, needlework, dolls, farm tools, letters, the first telephone switchboard and historical photos of the people who settled the town.

Some of those photos were taken by Les Broadstreet, my great-uncle. He was a master photographer who persuaded the town to turn the church into a museum. Following his example, I became a volunteer in late 2020. Preserving the history of my family and this town is an honor. ◉

SMALL-TOWN TREASURES

Nestled on a downtown corner, the Marion Historical Museum is open May through mid-October, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and noon to 2 p.m. on Sundays. The Old Settler's Day festival is held the last weekend of September.
kansastravel.org/marionmuseum.htm

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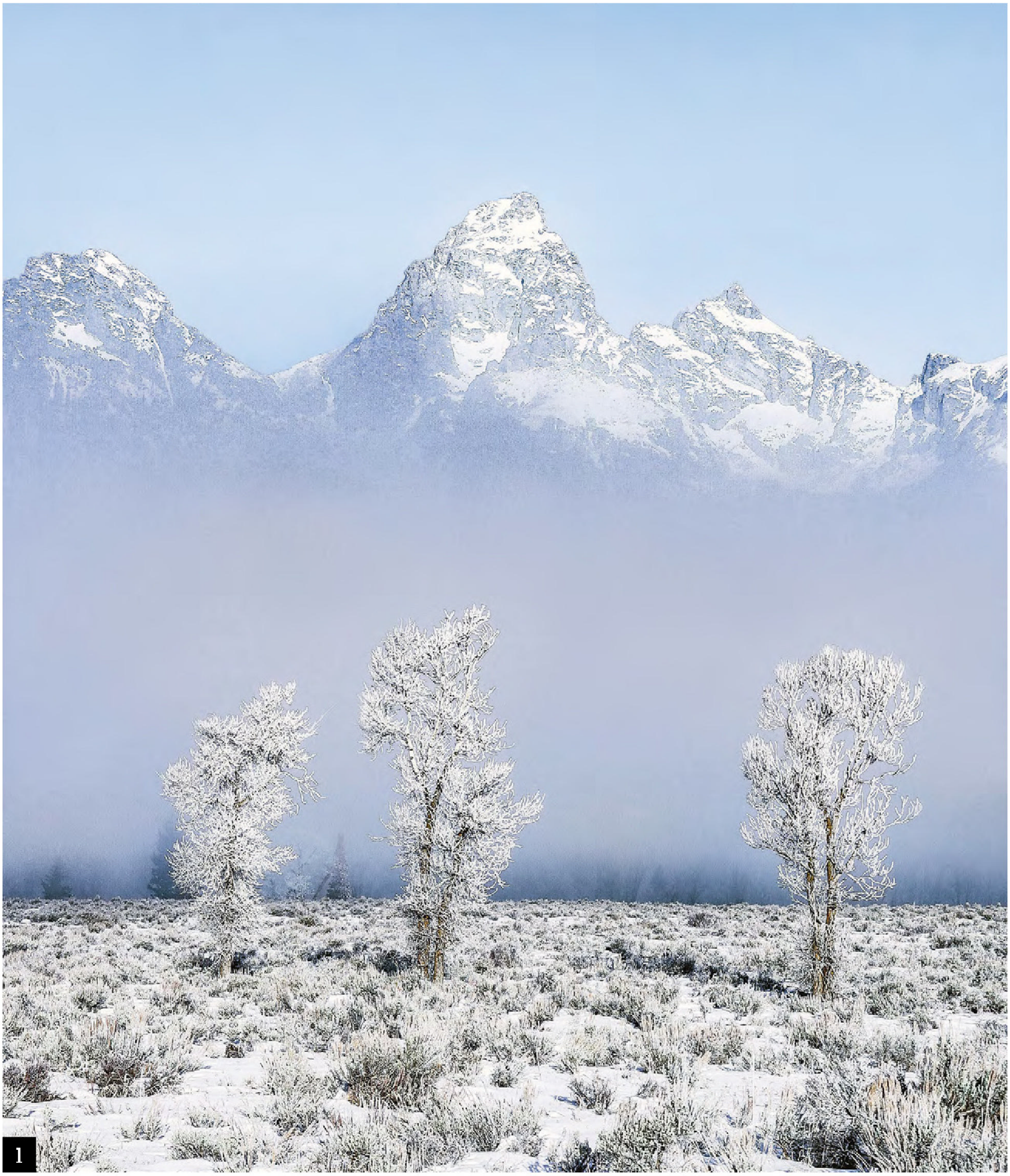

1

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Country readers share their photos of the season's best moments, from winter play to stunning landscapes.

2

1. FROZEN WONDERLAND
We awoke to trees covered in hoarfrost in Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park.
KELLY MINOR CAVE CREEK, AZ

2. PERFECT POWDER
My sons enjoyed their first time skiing at Heavenly Ski Resort in Lake Tahoe, Nevada.
JULIE ELLIOTT HOOVER, AL

3. WINTER WILDLIFE
A coyote zipped past us as we drove through Yellowstone National Park.
BUDDY ELEAZER ALLENTOWN, PA

MORE WINTER PHOTOS →

3

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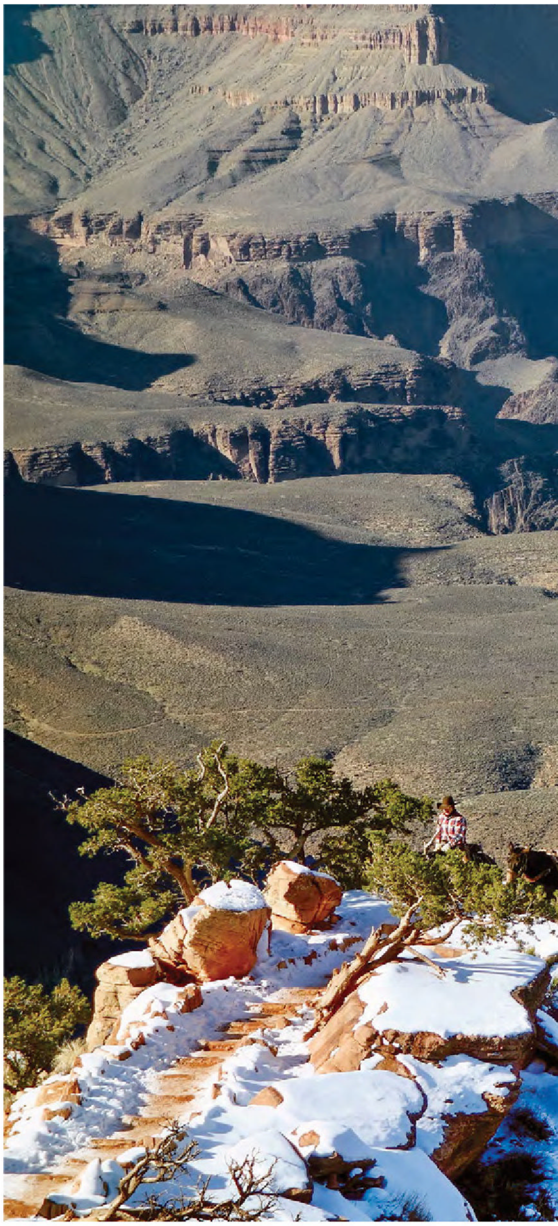


4. EARTH'S FROSTING

I captured the serenity of a winter snow at Salmon Creek Ranch in Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

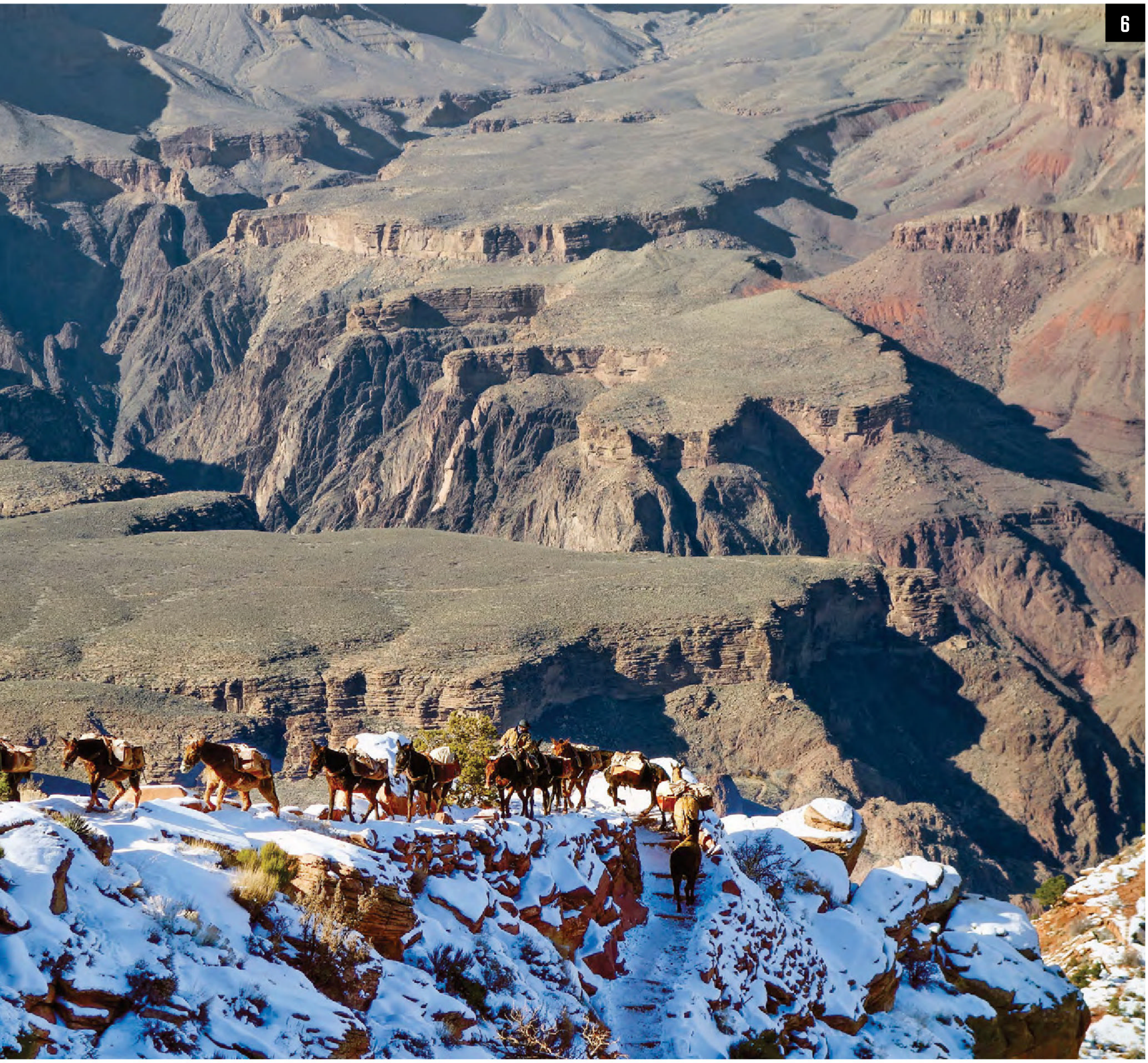
CYNTHIA BENDER MOSSYROCK, WA

5. COOL CAVE

My son Levi loves making snow forts and snowballs in our frigid Minnesota winters.

SAMANTHA ANDERSON GROVE CITY, MN

6



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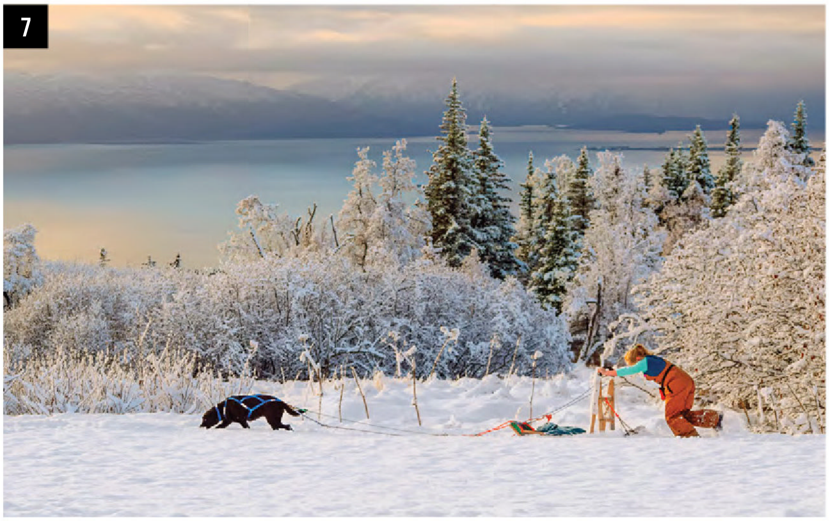


6. SURE-FOOTED STEEDS
A mule train ascends the South Kaibab Trail in Grand Canyon National Park.

JAMIE HANKS NASHPORT, OH

7. ALASKAN TRADITIONS
My daughter Adela is the rising musher in our family. A stunning backdrop makes the trek with her black lab even more enjoyable!

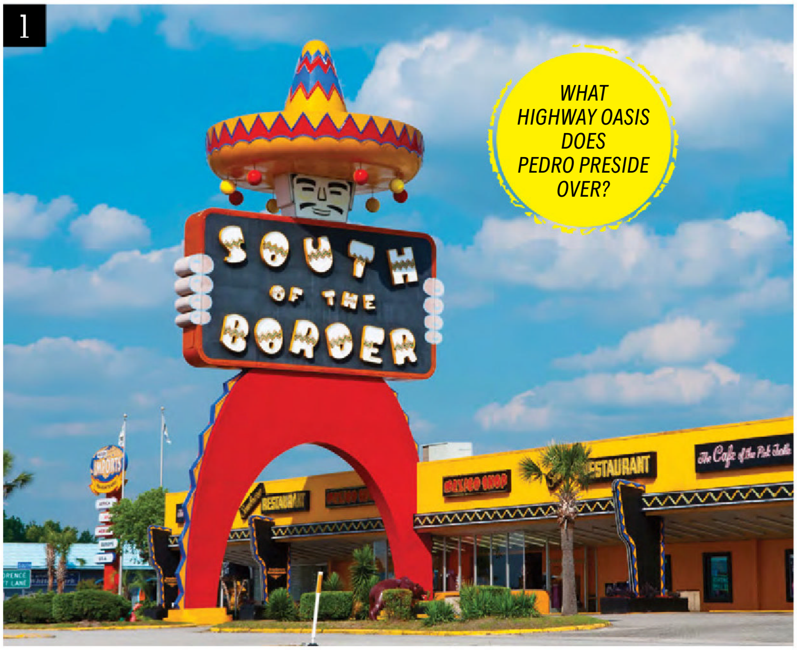
SHERRY PEDERSON HOMER, AK

PHOTO QUIZ

ON THE ROAD

Can you identify these roadside attractions and their states? Compare your answers to those below.

1



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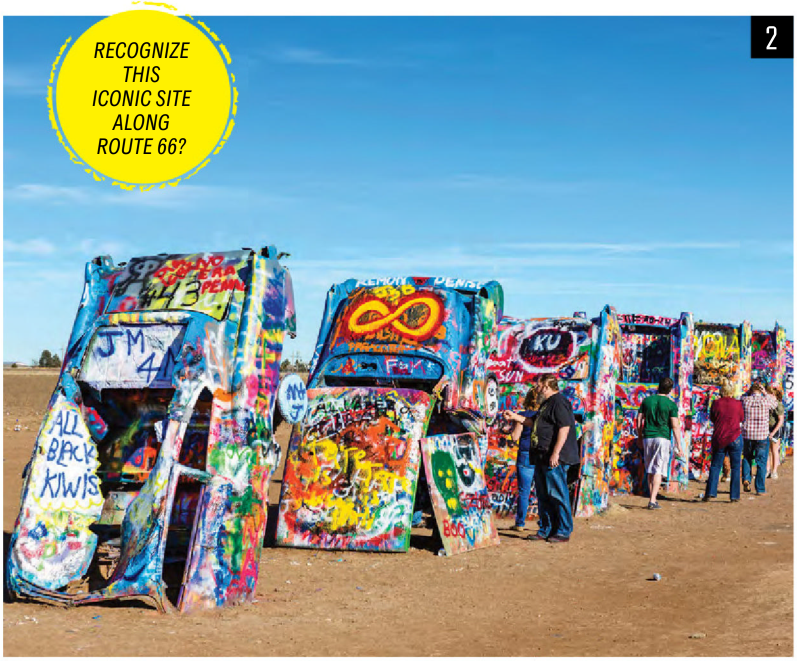

SOUTH OF THE BORDER: BILL BACHMANN/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; CADILLAC RANCH: IAN DAGNALL/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

ANSWERS 1. South of the Border Motor Inn, Hamer, South Carolina; 2. Cadillac Ranch, Amarillo, Texas

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Just for fun we hide two needles (either black or white) in each issue of *Country Extra*!

Did you find the needles in this issue?
Take a look at pages 9 and 50. In case you need a hint, we've circled the locations below.

Circle B Bar Reserve

FAMILY HISTORY
SMALL-TOWN TREASURES

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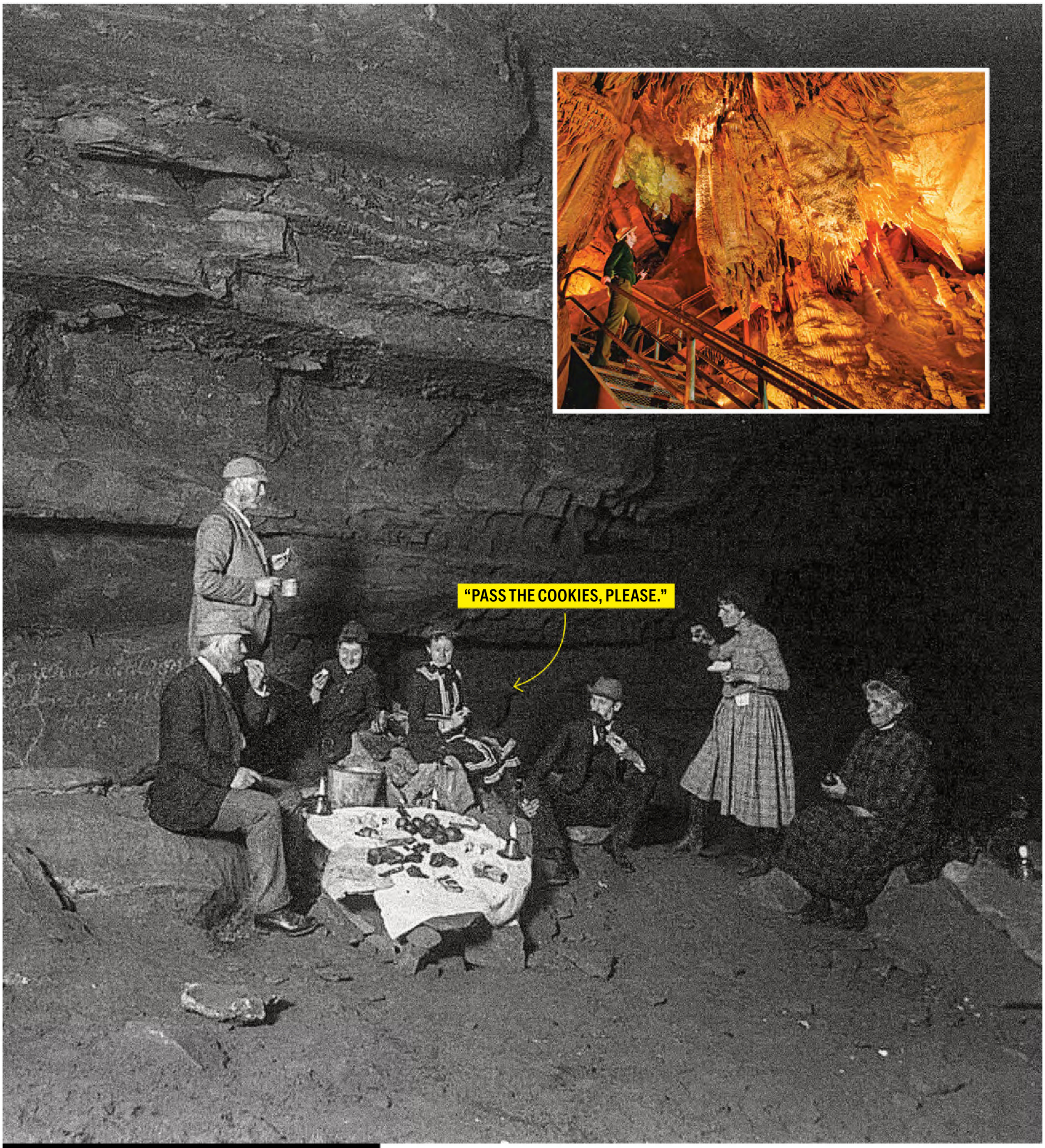
"PASS THE COOKIES, PLEASE."

NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHER

When Frances Benjamin Johnston entered Mammoth Cave with her camera, she conquered the darkness and captured fantastic photos of this Kentucky wonder.

1891 Published in *Mammoth Cave by Flash-Light*, this image shows Frances's companions dining in the dark.

2004 Touring the Drapery Room (its stalagmites resemble curtains) is made easier by stairs and a lighting system.

ON ASSIGNMENT

An East Coast heiress with many social connections, Frances's first camera was a gift from George Eastman, the inventor of the Kodak camera.

BELOW GROUND

Mammoth is the world's longest cave system. Only about 400 miles have been explored. Plan your visit at ***nps.gov/maca***

BLACK & WHITE: PHOTOGRAPHER FRANCES BENJAMIN JOHNSTON, CONTRIBUTOR YOGI BLACK/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; TOP: MARC MUENCH/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

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